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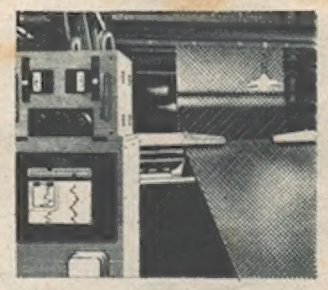

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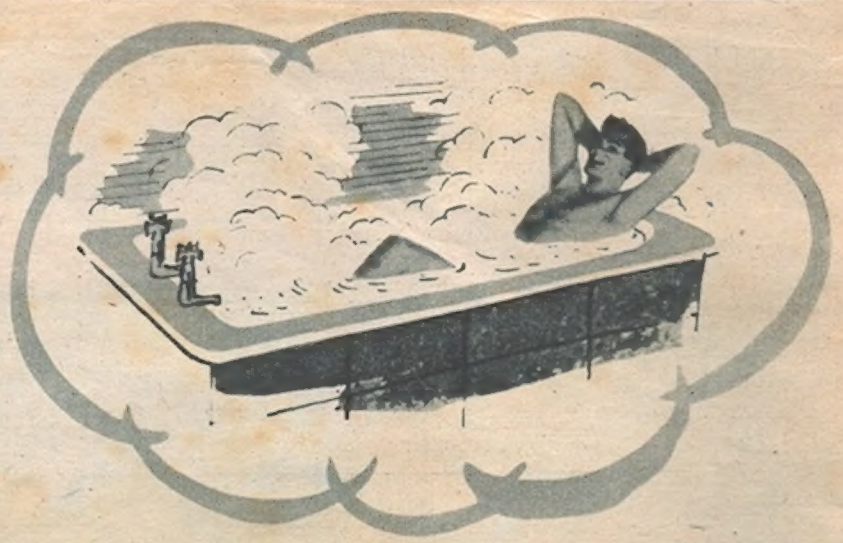

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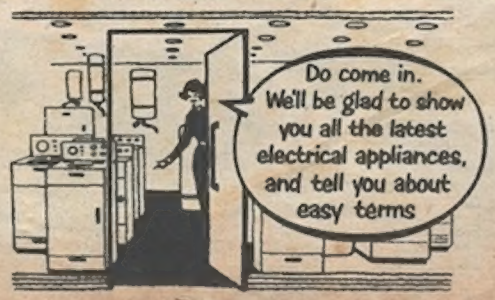

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Brian Cleeve even kept Laplanders interested

BEFORE he was twenty-two Brian Cleeve had travelled "three-quarters round the world" as a merchant seaman. Since then he has kept up a steady output of books and stories based on his experiences in the West Indies, South America, Africa and Europe. Yet for his latest story, *The Bride Price*, which begins on page 9, Cleeve stayed in his native Ireland. "It all started," he says, "when I was listening to the radio in my own drawing-room. I heard the beautiful Irish ballad of the Spanish Lady which is the 'theme-song' of my story."

Cleeve, who is thirty-two, comes from a family which arrived in Limerick from England several generations ago. His wife Veronica proudly says that she is "completely Irish," and was born and brought up in Dublin. They now live in a cottage there, at Ballsbridge.

Travel, however, has always been the spice of the Cleeves' life. Often accompanied by their two daughters—Berenice is ten and Tanga four—they have trekked through many outlandish regions. On one lecture tour Cleeve addressed interested audiences of Laplanders on the British public schools system. Another journey took Cleeve and his wife eight thousand miles through Africa and their home is now full of warlike relics from Zululand.

For the past three years Cleeve has been happy "vegetating in Dublin." But his wife says: "I always have a feeling he's just planning to take us on another trip."

IN 1940, John Salt was a milkman, working at his father's dairy farm in Essex. Six years later, when he came back from the war, he started to learn an entirely new craft—journalism. "The most startling result was that almost immediately I proposed marriage to the girl reporter from the local newspaper."

Salt's new story, *Passage From Trinidad*, which has the setting of his own wartime adventures, begins on page 20. For four years of the war he patrolled the Caribbean in a ten-man, seventy-two foot boat, on the look-out for submarines. "Often," he says, "we were in greater danger from the reefs than from the underwater menace. But somehow we always managed to get back to the delights of the West Indian islands."

Salt is now on the staff of a London evening newspaper and his wife Paula—the girl from the local paper—looks after their home at Totteridge in North London and their small daughter Lindon and two-year-old Nicholas. Sometimes she still uses her journalistic talents to help her husband when he is working at home. "But usually," Salt says, "when I come home in the evenings I feel more like doing the washing-up than writing." Often he writes until two in the morning. That, he says, leaves him plenty of time during the day for his favourite relaxation—talking.

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Free Speech

- **Can we trust elderly doctors?**
- **Condemning a child by name**
- **Plea for smiling policewomen**

My doctor recently made a faulty diagnosis which might have cost the life of my son had I not, almost against my better judgment, asked for a second opinion.

I still trust my doctor. I have known him all my life and anyone can make a slip. But he is a typical, hard-worked general practitioner — and medicine has been revolutionized since he qualified in 1917.

Now that we have a State medical service it is high time that doctors were given refresher courses at five or ten-year intervals. Then patients like me could be reasonably sure that their doctors were up to date. — G. M., Warwickshire.

Penalties Unchanged

The cost of living has risen by leaps and bounds, yet in many cases fines remains unchanged. That £5 penalty for pulling communication cords on trains was the equal of £15 or £20 prewar. Surely these penalties should be reviewed periodically.—George W. Deans, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

The Road Traffic Act, 1956, doubled prewar penalties for dangerous or careless driving, for example. But many penalties laid down under old statutes have been unchanged since the nineteenth century, and the maximum for common assault has been £5 or two months' imprisonment since 1861. The Magistrate's Association has recently made representations to the Home Office that such penalties should be reviewed.

Three, Three, Three

Surely your psychologist is a little off the mark in suggesting that the frequent appearance of the number three in old nursery rhymes and tales ("Free Speech," July 6) is due to the fact that three is just a number that comes easily to mind.

Three is a perfect number denoting beginning, middle and end; too much, too little and just enough; good, bad and indifferent.

So why shouldn't there be, quite rationally, three bears whose porridge was too hot, too cold and just right; three monkeys who see nothing, hear nothing and say nothing; three Wise Men of Gotham or, for that matter, three wise kings who followed a star? —F. Davy, Lancashire.

Feathered Scarer

We have found a way to stop birds eating things out of the garden. For years we have put up a potato with

feathers stuck in it—and for some reason the birds leave our crops alone. —R. A. Ward, Staffordshire.

Signing Away

One very important point missed from the article about army apprentices' schools ("Schoolboys at the double," John Bull, June 29) is that boys of fifteen can irrevocably sign away fifteen years of their lives. They sign for boys' service until they are eighteen, followed by twelve years' regular and reserve service.

No fifteen-year-old can know what he will be wanting to do with his life three years later. He should be allowed to confirm or revoke his enlistment at the age of eighteen.

Boys' service is a relic of less enlightened days in this country and it is time that it was ended.—Ex-Apprentice, Solihull, Warwickshire.

Taking Responsibility

Declining unattractive social engagements is not a sign of lack of responsibility on the part of menfolk, as claimed by Mrs. J. T., of Rotherham ("Free Speech," July 6).

It's a matter of personal honesty and integrity. Unlike women, few men can be sweet to other people's faces and then call them everything under the sun behind their backs.—T. S., Solihull, Warwickshire.

. . . In most cases the man has to suffer for the inability of his wife to say "No" to social invitations. And being infinitely more practical he sees no point in doing something that is neither profitable, pleasurable, nor necessary.—James W. Moore, Radford, Coventry.

. . . If Mrs. J. T. thinks that men's lack of responsibility is turning Britain into a second-rate country, why do so few women play their part in the international arena?

There is much they could do, but the usual remark is: "I don't understand that . . ." or "I can't be bothered . . ." when the topic is a little outside their usual interests.—G. E. Mochen, Prestwood, Bucks.

By Any Other Name

It's time that parents were relieved of the awesome task of naming a baby for life. Far too many children suffer misery at school because their names are too common, too obscure or can be shortened into something unpleasant.

What is the point of giving a girl a romantic name like Deirdre if she is likely to grow up into a frump? And I would certainly have thought twice about calling my own son Christopher if I'd known that he was going to develop a lisp.

Young people should be allowed to choose their own names when they come of age. — Gallipoli Williams, Monmouthshire.

Decline Of The Clot

We admire the gleaming machinery at agricultural shows, all designed to make farming quicker and better. But there are some things which mechanization has killed—and one of them is the Cornish (or Devonshire) real clotted cream.

The mechanical separator started the decline many years ago, but the death came gradually and for years the people in the know bought their cream at dairies or farms where separated cream was scalded in bulk, but where the genuine clotted cream was scalded on the milk in great shallow pans. Some pans had the new milk waiting for the cream to rise; others had their golden crust of clotted cream already on the top.

In those days you could send a basin to the dairy and have it back next day filled with junket and covered with a thick layer of clotted cream put on with a large flat

skimmer. It was angel's food—and the cream of today is poor stuff by comparison. — MRS. ALICE OGDEN, Flexbury Park Road, Bude, Cornwall.

Solemnity Of The Law

As a foreigner I would endorse any statement showering praise on the English policeman ("Free Speech," July 6). But although all the policemen I have met had a pleasant personality I have yet to see a policewoman smile. Can they? Or are they taking their jobs too seriously? — F. D. J., Manchester.

Record Discoveries

Thomas Moore, of Wingate, Co. Durham, says that he can't find a cricket team total in which the score of "every batsman, and the extras, has run into double figures" ("Free Speech," July 6).

If he consults *Wisden* for 1948, page 478, he will find that Gloucestershire performed this feat against Surrey at the Oval on June 30, 1947.—F. W. PERCHARD, Grange Court Drive, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.

. . . All the Somerset batsmen achieved double figures in the second innings of a match against Cambridge University at Bath on June 24, 1949. —PETER J. PAYNE, The Grove, Claines, Worcestershire.

. . . Derbyshire batsmen all scored double figures against Somerset in a drawn match at Taunton in August, 1932. — L. J. MURRELL, Denmark Hill, London, S.E.5.

Hush-a-bye Parent

Until our son was born my husband, who is a schoolteacher, often used to talk loudly in his sleep. He still talks, but in a whisper. Is there any

psychological explanation for this?— MRS. E. H., Dudley, Worcestershire.

"If he is near enough to consciousness to talk in his sleep he's near enough to realize that it's less comfortable to wake a baby than a wife," says a psychologist. "I hope she makes him write this out a hundred times."

Dropping A Penalty

An inscription on the wrapper of a pack of playing cards which I bought recently stated that the seller must cancel the threepenny duty stamp by writing or stamping his name on it, and that the customer must destroy the stamp before using the cards. The penalty for omitting to do either was stated to be a £20 fine.

I have bought many packs of cards but not one of the stamps has ever been cancelled as described. Has this law been dropped or just forgotten? — D. GIDDONS, Station Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.

"It has been dropped since December 31, 1952," says Customs and Excise. "But we are still using up the old stock of wrappers."

Rank Injustice

Today I received a rude letter from the secretary of a cricket club indicating that in all my dealings with him I pointedly omitted to address him by his proper rank of colonel. When will these has-been warriors stop trying to extract the last ounce of reflected glamour from something which finished, thank heaven, twelve years ago? I checked on this man. He got his commission with the Pay Corps and no doubt would have proved his mettle had

Their thoughts in the sky, their feet on the ground, aircrew blend courage with careful skill.

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great effort finds great reward

A YOUNG MAN'S DREAM may dwell on flying — on the exhilarating challenge in the airy spaces of sky. His common sense tends to call him back to earth — to consider the future and the building of a career.

Feet on the ground. In the Royal Air Force today you can satisfy both these demands — and the new appointment of Air Electronics Officers means more can now fly. These highly skilled men are trained to be responsible for all the electronic devices in the new V-bombers. But aircrew are much more than flyers. They are often seconded for other important work in Britain and abroad. Training others, international liaison, aircraft development — these are but some of the jobs that may come your way. And responsibility grows fast. You can be a Group Captain while in your early forties, responsible for perhaps 1,500 men and several squadrons of modern aircraft. Beyond that? There is no limit. Quality counts in the R.A.F. and there will always be room at the top for good men.

A sure future — good pay. **You can join the R.A.F. through the Direct Commission Scheme, confident of a permanent career right up to pension age. Or you can choose a twelve year engagement, with the option of leaving after eight. If you leave after 12 years you take back to civilian life a tax-free gratuity of £4,000! Whichever you choose the pay is good. At the new rates, a Flight Lieutenant of 25 for instance, can draw, with full allowances, about £1,500 a year.**

Present action — future perfect. Travel, adventure, opportunity, achievement . . . here is a unique chance to blend them all in the satisfaction of a great career. Are you qualified to grasp it?

How to fly with the R.A.F. You must be between 17½ and 26 and absolutely fit. You must have General Certificate of Education or Scottish Leaving Certificate or their equivalents. You must be able to lead others, and you must have aptitude as well as enthusiasm for flying. If you feel you have all these qualities, write at once for details of the schemes of entry to the Air Ministry (J.B.305c), Adastral House, London, W.C.1. Give date of birth and educational qualifications.

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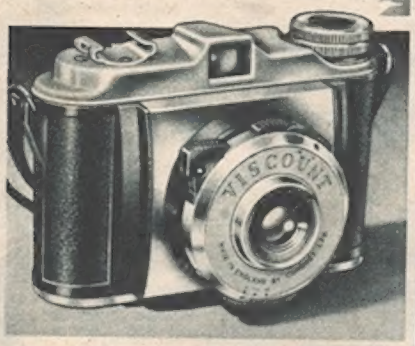

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

he ever been given the opportunity. I fought in Burma and was demobilized with the rank of captain, but I don't see what that has to do with my civilian life. My brother carried out miracles of organization and risked his neck night after night throughout the London blitz—but he doesn't go around calling himself by his National Fire Service rank.—A. S., Kent.

Buried Pleasure

I was interested to see that it is possible to keep rose buds fresh for Christmas ("Free Speech," June 1). You can also have new potatoes for Christmas dinner if you put them in an airtight tin full of sand and bury them in the garden.—BARBARA BREW, East Grinstead, Sussex.

Patient Pre-views

Nine out of ten letters given to patients by their own doctors to take to the consultant for whom I work have obviously been unsealed in some way or another.

One patient the other day even asked me before the letter was opened what a certain word meant. Had she been told the result would have been disastrous.

Surely someone can think of a better method than this.—MRS. R. R., Stoke, Devonport.

"Doctors have been trying to overcome this problem for years," says a general practitioner. "We write badly, use professional jargon and employ dog-Latin in prescriptions to put patients off the scent. If the possibility of cancer is in question, for example, it is often better for a patient to know nothing about it until there is definite proof."

How Children Create

The next time I overhear any of my neighbours making derogatory remarks about my garden I'll bang their heads together.

I know that it's a wilderness of small trees, thick undergrowth and shallow pits, but up the tallest tree is a platform of wood lashed to the branches, and the largest pit is roughly the shape of a ship and is

full of sand which I bought five years ago when I was going to lay a terrace.

I look at my garden through the eyes of my two young sons, to whom it's anything from a forest to a stormy sea. My garden is a creative playground, whereas most of my neighbours' gardens are sterile decorations. And they needn't be so smug. They're only too pleased that their children clamour to come and play in mine. It keeps them off all those precious lawns and flowerbeds. —P. H., Barnet, Herts.

Cutting The Toll

The high percentage of road accidents involving cyclists can't all be the fault of the cyclists, and no one should complain if we could cut this appalling toll by putting motorists to some slight inconvenience.

The sensible rule of the sea, where the dangers of collision are far less, is that steam gives way to sail. We should make it a part of the Highway Code that mechanically propelled vehicles always give way to pedestrians and cyclists. This wouldn't be unfair to those who choose to use a lethal weapon like a motor-car to speed them about their pleasure or business, with all the advantages that car ownership gives them. And it would save many thousands of lives and cripplings every year.—O. T., Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

All For The Present?

W. Aukett, of Westfield, Sussex, remembers bakers giving away pieces of mincemeat with their loaves ("Free Speech," June 29). Until the war it was the custom in Liverpool for bakers to put a small cake or sweet biscuit on top of the loaf when serving a child—and no child would go to a baker who didn't.

This gift was called a jockey, and was originally used as a make-weight when baking was not as precise as it

is today. But at one time all shopkeepers in Liverpool gave children gifts, and the barber who cut our hair for twopence always handed each of us a lead pencil when he had finished. — FRANK SHAW, Nyland Road, Huyton, Liverpool.

Barometric Curtains

I find that I can foretell the weather by watching my curtains. They are very long and are made from heavy cotton twill.

During fine weather they are one inch or more from the floor, but when rain is due the hem touches—and during a really damp spell it drags on the floor to the extent of two inches or so. — MRS. M. WICKER, Paignton, Devonshire.

"Cotton yarn expands and contracts according to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere," says a manufacturer. "A single thread has been used to control the water spray which varies the humidity of the spinning-rooms in a cotton mill."

Studying The Recent

P. A. Booth, who complains that today's teenagers are taught nothing about the events which led to the war ("Free Speech," June 15) might be interested in an experiment at my school. Modern history has been introduced into the fifth form curriculum, and a General Certificate of Education paper has been set covering the period from 1850 to the present day.—PATRICIA M. RICHARDS (aged sixteen), Barking Abbey Grammar School, Essex.

"The regulation General Certificate of Education history syllabus ends at 1933," says the secretary of the examining body. "But we will examine on any syllabus that a school cares to submit, as long as it is up to standard."

. . . Teenagers of today don't want to hear from older people what they did in the war. It is best forgotten, and nothing annoys them more than the "old 'uns" who will keep ranting on about it. The war is best left out of the school curriculum.—L. R., Kent.

Working At Games

It is significant that two leading sports personalities writing in JOHN BULL, July 6 ("My last race becomes a nightmare," by Chris Chataway, and "Could you last in big-time tennis?" by Angela Buxton) should end on a note of wistfulness for the rapidly diminishing "playing for fun" attitude.

Only a few years ago I cherished the idea of professional or full-time sport as my career. Being paid to keep fit was my idea of heaven. But now that I am twenty I have changed my mind. There are too many care-worn faces at the top.—DONALD F. BARLAND, Benchill, Manchester, 22.

Salt Unlimited

Salt has always been a mystery to me. Unlike sugar it doesn't grow from beet or cane, and in spite of your article ("Your Life In A Crystal," JOHN BULL, June 22), I am still at a loss to know how it replenishes itself. Salt beds, like coal beds, surely can't go on for ever.—D. W., London, N.W.3.

"Rain, streams and rivers are constantly washing minute particles of salt from the rocks and carrying them into the oceans, where they have been building up for hundreds of millions of years," says an expert. "So even if we reach the end of the world's vast salt beds there will still be the oceans to start on."

Gardener Out-dated?

When someone told me that I could grow palm trees from date stones I put some in water with a piece of charcoal to keep the water sweet. That was last Christmas—and I am still waiting for them to sprout. —A. L., Cheshire.

"I doubt whether they will germinate in water," says a botanist, "but date stones usually sprout within a month if planted in a pot of sand and kept in a sunny window or on a radiator. The main thing is to keep the sand moist."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

WELL, can *you* think of a better reason for going up mountains? Drinking beer at the top may be only one of the attractions, but let no woman scorn the weary traveller who succumbs to the charms of local hospitality rather than the beauties of nature. It would be a dull world if everybody on these coach tours came along for the same reason, says our cover artist, although this year *he* will be going by caravan. "But with only an eight horse-power car to tow it, mountains are out." Which is a pity: for Ditton rather likes his beer.

Picnic time is Guinness Time

—that's the secret of a really good time

HOW'S THAT for division of labour: the girls prepare the food and the men (trust them!) bring along the Guinness. Everyone's got a whale of an appetite and doesn't that Guinness go down a treat! It's quite true that Guinness does much more than quench your thirst. Before you started, you were feeling pretty exhausted. Now, thanks to the goodness of Guinness, you're quite revived and uplifted. Guinness is no ordinary drink. If you've never tried it have a glass today with your midday or evening meal. Guinness barley, Guinness hops and Guinness yeast will do you a world of good.

It's the appetising taste of Guinness that goes so well with food

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We loved each other, but our peoples lived in hate. One day there would have to be a reckoning

THE BRIDE PRICE

by ***BRIAN CLEEVE***

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

I WAS half way down to the harbour when I heard her singing. My sea-boots were slipping on the greasy cobbles of the narrow lane below the market place, and the sea was spread out in front of me like a darkened mirror.

"As I walked down through Dublin city
At the hour of twelve of the night. . . ."

I checked my steps to listen, afraid that she would hear me coming and stop. I knew who it was that was singing. It was Kathleen O'Hanrahan. There wasn't anyone in Kilmara that didn't know her voice. It was almost the one beauty that we had: Kathleen O'Hanrahan singing in chapel at sung mass, every fourth Sunday.

And yet even so, even listening to her and wanting her to go on, I felt that sudden spurt of anger that all of us in the village have always felt when one of the mountain people comes among us unasked. As long as any man's grandfather could remember, generation to generation, we've hated the mountain people, and they've hated us.

They're a different people, wild and sullen, living by sheep and stealing and the potheen they brew. The men have knives under their shirts and a kind of madness in their eyes, so that you'd pick them out in a crowd of ordinary men at a glance. And their women are the same; big, raw-boned slatterns with ravens' voices.

Kathleen O'Hanrahan wasn't a slattern, give her that. She was as beautiful as her voice. All the raven in her was her hair, which was so black that it shone like a bird's wing against the white paleness of her face; and her eyes were ice blue. But she was a mountain woman for all that, tall and fierce.

And now she was here, in the heart of the village, singing "The Spanish Lady."

"Who should I spy but a Spanish Lady
Washing her feet by candlelight. . . ."

I felt a fury at her insolence. Did she think that, because she sang at mass for us once a month, she could do what she liked, that she could come flaunting her voice into our night time? If it was her uncle, Big Tadg Moriarty himself, he wouldn't dare to come like that; and, if he did, he'd find himself stretched out on the cobbles with three or four men round him in case he got up again.

"First she washed them, then she dried them,
O'er a fire of amber coal. . . ."

I went round the corner at a run. I don't know quite what I meant to do; drive her out, maybe, as you'd drive a hawk out of a hen-roost.

Then I saw her, and I stopped still in my

One of the Moriartys was sliding out on to the floor. But it wasn't me that he was making for . . . it was Kathleen

steps as if held by an invisible net. She sat in the doorway of Meg Moriarty's shop, and the walls were whitewashed by the moonlight and the shadows were deep as night behind her. She was sitting on a stool with her feet bare and a basin of water on the step in front of her, and a white towel in her hands.

"*Wack for the tooral looral lady. . . .*" she was singing, joy in her voice. And suddenly the night and the village fell away from me, the hatred and the meanness; and I saw instead a wide country full of white roads and wine and women singing.

And then she heard me and drew her feet under her skirt as if she were afraid that I might steal them.

"I'm . . . I'm sorry," I said, and we looked at each other in the silver moonlight. I don't know what she saw. Nothing much; a fisherman in black thigh boots and a thick white jersey, with red hair and big, awkward hands. But I saw beauty.

She was busy with her woman's things, rolling up the towel and emptying the basin softly, softly, and yet as hurriedly as she could. In a minute she would be gone, her white feet running, the door closing.

I fumbled at the neck of my jersey. "I . . . I liked your singing," I said.

She said nothing to that, but looked upwards at me from where she was bending, and seemed to smile.

"What are you doing down here?" I asked her.

"Meg Moriarty is sick," she answered. "I'm down here looking after the shop till she's better."

THEN I understood. Meg Moriarty was some kind of cousin of Big Tadg, and one of the few people who ever came down from the mountain and settled in the village. It didn't surprise me that she should send back to her own people for help if she were sick. There weren't many of us that would have helped her.

We had kept our voices low, but even so the old woman must have heard us from where she was lying sick in bed.

Suddenly she shrieked out: "Kathleen . . . Kathleen. . . . Who's that you're talking to? Come in out o' that at once."

"Coming . . . coming . . ." Kathleen called; and then she was gone, her bare feet quiet on the grey stones of the floor, the door shutting behind her with a soft jingling tinkle of the shop bell. . . .

All the next day and night we were out fishing, far beyond the islands, with the seas running grey and heavy and the nets stiff as wet timber to get aboard. But I sang as if the skies were as blue as china and I was lying in the warm sun.

I looked at my brothers, Michael and Peadar, and they seemed like another race of men from me, dumb and heavy and bullock-stupid. While I was a fisherman's youngest son in an ancient story, that loved a white princess.

A coil of rope slithered, and near took my feet from under me and toppled me into the sea. Peadar clumped the side of my head good-naturedly.

"He must be in love, Mick," he said, and they opened their big clumsy mouths and barked like seals, with my father taking it up from the tiller. But they didn't know what I knew, and I only smiled. And the next morning after we landed I was up to Meg Moriarty's shop.

There was no one there. The bell of the shop rang softly and I stepped down into cool, scented shadows: tea, soap, and lemons withering; a basket of oranges and plug tobacco, and acid drops, and boot polish, and bolts of calico, and pepper and cinnamon.

I waited, rapping a penny gently on the old, brown counter, and after a moment she came, her dark hair caught behind her head with a silver comb and her eyes still misted with the earliness of the morning.

"A box of matches, please," I said, and then she recognized me and smiled before she could help herself.

"Is this the nearest to the harbour you could find matches?" she said.

"The nearest I could find the kind I'm after," I said.

We stood looking at one another across the counter, she with her hand half-reaching up to a shelf for the matches, and I leaning across the worn mahogany towards her, looking at the slenderness of her waist and throat, and the fineness of her hand.

"Then here they are for you," she said. "Will that be all?"

"Not quite. There's a grand dance on Saturday across the bay at Killybally. I suppose . . . I suppose you'd have a partner for that already?"

"I might," she said, "or I might not. But it wouldn't be a boy from the village here, if I had. Do you think there are no dancers up the mountain?"

I stood saying nothing, with my eyes cast down, and maybe that was the best thing that I could have said, because she laughed at me.

"Can you dance, fishing boy, in your big sea-boots?"

"I have a name," I said. "Owen Roe. Owen Roe Herly. And I can dance. I can dance till your feet are flying. And I've ten shillings in my pocket to spend on matches, twopence by twopence, and all day to buy them in. Or . . . or will you say yes to me now?"

She laughed again, throwing her head back and putting one hand to her hair.

"All right," she said. "If you dare take me, I'll dare come. My own people will be there as well, remember."

But it wasn't until that night, when I told my brothers, that I really remembered what it meant.

"Are you mad?" said Michael. "Are you stone mad entirely? If Big Tadg and his sons see you with Kathleen O'Hanrahan at the dance, they'll kill you. Do you remember last year in Bettymaine, when Tim Foley got tight and went over to ask one of the Moriarty girls to dance? Do you remember the fight there was that night? And you wanting to take Kathleen O'Hanrahan to Killybally?"

"A mountain girl?" said my mother, sticking the point of the bread knife into the loaf as if it were Kathleen. "Not while I'm your mother. What's wrong with taking one of the nice, decent, quiet girls from the village, may I ask? Young Brid Foley, for instance, or Brenda Delaney?"

I started to tell her, and then stopped. The village girls walked flat-footed and were as heavy as geese and dull as harbour mud. How could I tell her what Kathleen was, compared to them?

"Of course, if you're afraid to come with me . . ." I said to my brothers.

"There's none of you will go with anyone," said my father. "We'll be fishing Saturday night." He turned to us. "Now, don't let's have any more nonsense talked about girls or dancing, or I'll be asking Father Farrell to talk to you."

And so I said no more. For three days and nights Kathleen O'Hanrahan's name wasn't mentioned in our house, and if my mother was surprised sometimes at the eagerness I showed to go and get messages for her when she wanted soap or matches or a packet of tea, she put it down to my being a good son.

On Saturday night I took sick, with a hot fever and sweating. It was easy enough to manage. Any boy who ever wanted to miss a couple of days in school knows half a dozen tricks that will do it.

My father would have had me out in the boat

The air in the shadowy room became taut

with him, sweating or not, but my mother wouldn't let him.

"A good hot lemon drink," she said, "and bed." And so I lay in bed in the small, tumbled room I shared with my brothers, and listened to their sea-boots clumping down the lane towards the harbour, and my father's voice grumbling at being short-handed.

I waited another hour, until my mother was finished fussing in and out and was safe in her own bed, and then I slid out of mine, softly as a shadow. I got dressed in my good coat and boots, and a clean shirt, and a tie, until I looked like a gentleman, and all the time I moved quieter than a mouse.

I slid out of the narrow window. For some reason I had a doubt in my mind that Kathleen might not have waited for me, and I almost ran up the lane, my heart thudding in my chest with excitement.

I came to Meg Moriarty's lane, and a shadow

as rigging in the wind, but silent, very silent. I licked my lips and guided Kathleen forward until we stood side by side before Big Tadg himself

moved from the shop doorway and came towards me.

"Kathleen," I whispered.

"I thought you weren't coming," she said. There was a white scarf at her throat and she had her dancing slippers in her hand, because there was a six-mile walk in front of us that needed strong shoes. I took the slippers out of her hand and slid them into my pocket, and drew down the soft white wool of her scarf so that I could see her mouth, dark as a red leaf in the moonlight.

"Who'd keep me from you?" I whispered. My hands were on her shoulders and we were very close, her eyes not quite as tall as mine, and her body slim and delicate as a bird's bone under the clumsiness of my hands.

"Oh, Kathleen, Kathleen," I stammered.

Then I kissed her, and the sky could have fallen for all I cared, and shattered to fragments on my head. What did the dance matter? What did anything matter but ourselves? The thoughts raced in my head the way they do sometimes between one breath and the next, of running away somewhere where there was no mountain and no village, no harm and hatred and bitterness; somewhere where we weren't known, and we could marry as they do in books, and be happy ever after.

And then the wind came rushing up the lane in a sudden flurry of cold, whipping the end of Kathleen's scarf behind my head, and I felt her shivering.

"Maybe we shouldn't go," she said. "It is madness to think of it, with all the trouble there'll be."

For a moment I wavered. It would be so easy to let it go, to walk with Kathleen for a little time and slip back to my bed.

I could court her secretly—but what then? One day there'd have to be a reckoning, or else I'd have to slip away like a dog with a stolen bone. And how would I live with myself then?

"Come," I said. "Are you afraid to come with me?"

She lifted her chin at that, and we started walking, and I tried to think only of her hand being in mine. But instead I thought of the man whose skull got broken at Bettymaine the year before, and the other man whose ribs got stove in with a boot. If only my brothers had been with me, it would have been another thing. But this had to be faced alone. . . .

And, a lot sooner than I was ready to face it, we were over the brow of the headland and there were the lights of Killybally parish hall glittering below us, and the whisper of the dance music on the wind.

There was no one noticed us as we slipped in at the door. Kathleen went to change her shoes, and I took a look at the crowd. You could pick

Continued on page 36

It's "men only" in Morocco

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

The Arabs were enjoying tea two hundred years before the Battle of Hastings! They introduced it to Morocco where it has been a favourite ever since.

The Moroccans use green tea. On special occasions in wealthy homes, a tea-maker is employed; in the average home the host himself makes the tea.

Moroccans first make tea as we do, but usually in a silver teapot most likely made in Sheffield or Birmingham. Then they add sugar—kept in loaf-form in a special box—a few leaves of mint, stir well, and serve in glasses.

The host drinks first. If the tea is not as sweet and "minty" as he likes it, he empties the glasses back into the teapot, adds more sugar or mint as required, and re-serves. Sugar is never put directly into the glasses.

Why no women in the picture? In Morocco, they are segregated.

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A tireless, relentless tracker, Remoh has helped to arrest twenty-four suspects in two years. He has solved at least one crime on his own

Remoh gets his man

by ROBERT HOLLES

A police dog is a detective on a leash. With his handler, Remoh tracks through ice, snow and marsh. But when he's caught his quarry, he simply wags his tail

Detective Constable Cousins is Remoh's handler and grooms him daily. The dog's rest days are spent at Cousins's home

THE foreman of a farm near the village of Dudbrook, in Essex, was told by the local police constable: "There is a bicycle thief in the area who steals machines in the towns, then rides them into the country and sells them. Let me know if you come across him."

Two days later the foreman telephoned the constable. "Someone is on the farm, trying to sell a bicycle." When the constable arrived, he and the foreman searched the farm area and saw a man with a bicycle riding towards them. As soon as the rider saw the policeman, he abandoned the bicycle and ran off across country.

The constable telephoned headquarters and asked for the help of a tracker dog. Soon afterwards a message reached Detective Constable Peter Cousins over the radio set of the van in which he was travelling with his dog, Remoh.

"I reached the farm twenty minutes later," Cousins says, "and was shown the spot where the bicycle had been abandoned." With his dog, Cousins set out in pursuit. "Remoh picked up the track at once. We travelled across rough country for four miles, and eventually found the suspect. He was very surprised to see us and made no attempt to escape." At his trial, the man admitted stealing the bicycle and forty-six others. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

In two years of active operations with Essex County Constabulary's dog unit, Cousins and Remoh have arrested twenty-four suspects and made possible the detention of numerous others. Remoh, a tawny, four-year-old, 80 lb. Dobermann Pinscher, is a tireless and relentless tracker on duty. Off duty, he takes life casually and never exerts himself unnecessarily. "Remoh's ambition," says Cousins, "is to eat and sleep as much as he can. He seems to know instinctively the difference between the real thing and a trial run."

Last September Remoh was entered for the championship trials for army, police and sheep dogs, held at Chelmsford. The dogs had to follow a half-mile human track which zigzagged across a meadow. "Remoh overshot the first leg of the track and didn't seem bothered about picking it up again," says Cousins. "We finished the trials well down the list."

At 11 a.m. on the following day, with Remoh back in his kennel, a call for assistance came from Brentwood police. "At eleven thirty," says Cousins, "I arrived at a bungalow which had been burgled."

Outside the bungalow Remoh picked up a scent. "We tracked straight through the garden, and through the gardens of a number of neighbouring houses," says Cousins. "He took me through a spinney, along a cart track, across a road, and round the side of a churchyard. After we had gone a mile and a half he stopped at a fence."

On the other side of the fence Cousins saw two men running across a field. He shouted at them to stop. "They turned round, saw Remoh, and came to a sudden halt." Cousins arrested the men, who were found in possession of money which had been stolen from gas and electricity meters at the bungalow.

Essex Constabulary's dog section has two

Continued on page 34

SANDY was a soldier's boy

by DAVID WALKER

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

Sandy never took his eyes off Davie Muir. He was icy strong now, and knew what he was going to do . . .

He had caught eighteen trout for the colonel. . . . This was the grandest day in his life—and it wasn't nearly over yet

He stopped, foot on the fence between Miss Abigail's land and Drumfechan. It would be wrong to cross the fence. Taking trout from Drumfechan would be poaching—and they might meet big Geordie MacTaggart, the gamekeeper. . . .

Sandy, the ten-year-old son of Black Watch Pipe Major McBain, was on a fishing expedition with Sheila Spens, the C.O.'s daughter—and the fish were not biting in Altnadean. Were they hungrier in Drumfechan?

"The colonel sent me for to catch his supper," Sandy said, looking up the glen at the sparkling burn. If Colonel Spens wanted trout for supper, Sandy would get them. He would do anything for the colonel.

"I ken fine yon's the only place," Sandy said, making up his mind. He swung over the fence and Sheila reluctantly followed.

The Black Watch were stationed in Altnadean near the Secret Place, as Sandy called the atomic research establishment up in the hills. Sheila was staying with her father at Miss Abigail's big house; Sandy's folk had half Mum's Auntie Ethel's house. The other half was Altnadean P.O. and sweetie shop, and Auntie Ethel.

Three weeks ago, Sandy and his catapult had strayed into Miss Abigail's garden and twenty-seven panes of glass got broken in her greenhouse. . . . Every day since, Sandy had been working off the debt.

Now, fishing on forbidden land, they found the trout biting well. Sandy was happily taking the hook out of the eighteenth fish when he heard a gasp and Sheila flopped down beside him.

A man was standing a hundred yards down the glen, a black dog beside him. Sandy knew at once that it was Geordie McTaggart. . . .

PART TWO

The Encounter With Geordie

They lay in a dip in a heather clump. They lay in the small, loud-scented hiding world, with bees, with wiry scuffings of the heather, puff-pant, thump-thump, please don't let me cough. Tick-tick went Sandy's tinny ticker for a long, long time.

"Didn't see us," Sandy whispered. "Must've gone."

A cloud came across the sun, which seemed queer on a cloudless day. A voice said: "Sit then, Bess."

Sandy held his breath and looked. That cloud was the size of Geordie's back ten feet away. He had come like a ghost or a thief in the night or a keeper on the prowl, and he was sitting on a rock. Then Geordie sang a song:

"There was a wee cooper he came frae Fife
Nickety nackety noodle-eh. . . .
Tarrumpty, umpty a tumpty wife . . ."

It was a nice voice, not too loud and not too soft and not too high and not too low, and it did not matter about Geordie not knowing all the fine old rattle-tattle words of that old song, and it did not matter that he did not sing it right in tune. What mattered was that. . . .

". . . Hey willy-wallacky roon Karashity roodle day."

Song over. Silence. The black dog whined unseen. "You smell poachers, Bess? Well, so do I. Come away out, then, poachers."

It happened as quick as that, and Sandy and Sheila were standing up, and Bess barked once. Geordie stared on down the glen. "Fine day for it," Geordie said.

"Ay," said Sandy to Geordie's back. "Fine day fer it." He did not say that very well. He supposed Geordie meant a fine day for to be poaching the Laird of Drumfechan's trout. Sheila did not speak.

Geordie turned to look at them. Sandy looked at Geordie. It was the first time he had seen him, but Geordie quite came up to expectations. He seemed about big enough to put the colonel in his pocket. He did not smile and he did not frown, and he did not wear a fierce expression. He just gave you the feeling that it wouldn't be much good running away from Geordie MacTaggart. Not that Sandy could have. His knees were jellies.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Sheila Spens."

Geordie smiled. "So you and your dad are at Miss Abigail's." He turned to Sandy, solemn again. "And who would you be?"

Sandy opened his mouth to speak. Being caught poaching and then asked questions by Geordie MacTaggart the first time he had ever seen Geordie MacTaggart was, perhaps, a bit too many things at once. Sandy tried, but nothing came out.

"He's Sandy McBain, the pipe major's boy."

Well then, a real broad smile came over Geordie's sun-burned face, and he looked at Sandy, and the smile was gone, but his face was kind. "My dad was in the regiment," he said.

Sandy's tongue got working for him in a rush to get the explanation out. "It was this way, the colonel was wanting a puckle trout to his supper and he gave me the job, and we fished all the way up, and we never got one, and Sheila wasn't for coming across the march, but I thought it looked just fine up here, and so we came. . . ."

"H'mm," said Geordie. "How many trout was the colonel needing to his supper?"

"Twenty would do, the colonel said."

Geordie put back his head and laughed. He had a right big cheery laugh. "Twenty should do," he said. "How many did you catch?"

"Eighteen, with Sheila's big one." They showed the trout to Geordie.

"Trespass," he said, serious again. "Poaching," he said. Then with his forefinger Geordie ticked off the eighteen offences on the fingers of his other hand. Some hand, it was. Then Geordie was muttering to himself. "Serious," he muttered. "Verra serious offence. But mebbe the laird wouldn't be grudging eighteen trout to a Black Watch colonel's supper. But mebbe ay and mebbe hooch-ay seeing he's nephew to Miss Abigail." Geordie looked at Sandy and then he looked at Sheila. "My name's George MacTaggart," Geordie said.

"I ken yon fine," protested Sandy.

"Me too," protested Sheila.

"Well now we're all acquainted." Geordie stood up to shake hands with Sheila and Sandy, and then they all sat down again. They looked at the purple heather and the bright green bogs. They heard sheep crying on the hill. The wind

Mum was a bit upset, but she seemed right proud of Sandy. She gave him a kiss on one of the lesser bruises

and the sun were soft together. The three of them sat quiet together until Geordie said: "The McBains have been pipers in the regiment a hundred and fifty years. Is that right, Sandy?"

"That's right," Sandy said. It seemed that Geordie knew everything.

"And you?"

"I'm to be a piper," Sandy said.

Geordie did not speak. It was funny, knowing Geordie—a feeling that you must have always known him. "I'm in the Territorials myself," he said. "We'll be called up soon, the way things look."

"I don't see about wars," said Sheila. "I don't see why they happen, not exactly."

"Nor me, neither," Geordie said. "And the other folk are in the wrong, I ken that fine, and yet I wonder is there not a fault about us too." Geordie sighed, not sadly. "Och, well," he said. "It's the bad days make the bonny."

There was a big round stone in front of them. It was about a foot across, and it was whitish, sparkling stuff, like granite. Sandy looked at it. He was having an idea. He gave a wee cough to clear his throat and then he said: "Mister MacTaggart, would you be after putting the shot much nowadays?"

"Och, call me Geordie's good enough," said Geordie. "I'm finished with all that in the compeetitions. I just try one whiles for fun."

Sandy glanced across at Sheila, who was staring at that stone now too; and he stared at it, and the two of them, one on each side of Geordie MacTaggart, went on staring at it. Sandy did not dare to ask. He just kept staring in the hopes.

Geordie looked round at Sheila and then at him; but they kept on staring. So then Geordie gave a chuckle. "You're a caution, the pair o' ye."

He stood up, took off his nickerbocker jacket, rolled up his sleeves, and gave a lovely shoulder-shrug of mighty muscles. Then he picked up that stone as if it weighed two pounds, not twenty-five at least, and he balanced it in his right hand against his cheek and neck, and poised himself, and swung far back and round and down, and then he uncoiled in one long

Continued on page 30

King Charming welcomes the Queen

by ALAN LLOYD

In Jersey's sunshine he is president, judge and diplomat. But his royal guest will find that gaiety and friendship are the basis of his rule

At nine o'clock one evening last winter the doors of Jersey's Royal Court were closed on a criminal case that had lasted several days. The presiding judge, Sir Alexander Moncrieff Coutanche, Bailiff of Jersey, stepped into his car and drove himself home. At eight thirty next morning he was boarding a plane to fly to an international conference in London. Immediately after the conference he returned to hear a divorce case. A day later he was sitting as president of the island's parliament, the States.

In less than a week he had been judge, diplomat and politician, by turn. That is not unusual for Coutanche who, because he probably holds more authority than any one man in any other democratic state, has been styled "the King of the Isle." Supervising the government of his 55,000 "subjects" in accordance with laws which are partly English, partly French, partly ancient and partly modern demands a special range of knowledge.

When the Royal Court was in session two years ago a woman stood up in the public gallery and shouted, "*Haro, Haro, à l'aide mon Prince!*" Then, leaving her seat, she ran to the Bench and asked the Bailiff to stop traffic from damaging her roadside house. She had looked up a centuries-old law called the Clameur de Haro, under which an islander with a grievance can compel the court to take action by invoking the aid of Rollo, an ancient marauding prince.

Coutanche was not caught out by the strange interruption. He ruled: "You have no right to raise the Clameur here. It must be done before witnesses at the spot where the grievance lies. Please remove this lady from the court."

The Bailiff's influence covers almost every aspect of island life. He entertains visiting VIPs from many parts of the world—and this week he will be host to the Queen on her one-day tour of the island.

All property deals must be approved by a Bench over which he presides, and so must the formation of Jersey companies. No kind of public entertainment may take place unless his permission is granted. Such sweeping powers have aroused resentment from time to time, but Coutanche, square-jawed, with bushy eyebrows and the amiable air of an Old English sheepdog, enjoys popularity and respect among most of the islanders. Even the rebels agree that his ability to persuade by personal charm is a valuable asset to the island.

Not long ago representatives of the States met officials of the British Transport Commission to try to obtain a better boat service to and from the mainland. Fruitless efforts had been made in the past to get the Commission to replace its antiquated steamers with something more up to date. It seemed that the latest conference was to prove equally unsatisfactory from the island's point of view. "We came away from the talk," said a member of the Jersey committee, "with the feeling that the differences between ourselves and the Commission were insurmountable.

"Afterwards there was a reception at which the Bailiff was present. Immediately the atmosphere changed. Good-humouredly he reprimanded the B.T.C. officials for not having improved the service, and he poked fun at the boats. Inoffensive though his words were, they were shrewdly effective. The outcome was that the Commission agreed to build new boats."

Shortly after the last war, when swarms of Colorado beetles became a serious threat to European agriculture, Coutanche was invited to smooth the way for some form of international action. Jersey's bilingual Bailiff packed his bag and followed the conference trail to Paris, Berne, Florence and other European centres. The talks he helped to arrange were successful. The result was the European Plant Protection Organization which, among other achievements, has since reduced the beetle menace to negligible proportions. Coutanche became one of its founders, and Jersey a full member.

"Not that I knew the first thing about beetles," says Coutanche. "I was there to keep things on a cordial basis."

When the Bailiff recently visited Canada as a delegate of the Parliamentary Commonwealth Association, Jersey settlers in that country gave a banquet in his honour at a large hotel. Around the tables, men and women who had sailed from the ancient Norman isle near France to seek their fortunes abroad settled down to an evening of reminiscence.

At the height of the celebration Coutanche asked his hosts to take him to a telephone. There he began to work through a list of aged and infirm people who had been unable to get to the reunion. One by one he telephoned them and greeted them, some in English, some in French, with a friendly message from the island of their birth.

The gesture was typical of Coutanche, who at sixty-six has the energy and appearance of a man ten years his junior. When he was entertained by the French municipality in Dinard last year a cabaret dancer at the Casino pressed him to join her in a dance. His expert and uninhibited rhumba technique surprised the girl as much as it delighted his official hosts and the rest of the audience.

As a lawyer, Coutanche was largely responsible for the present-day use of English in the Jersey Court. Until shortly before the war, cases were heard exclusively in French, which is still technically the legal language of the island. Before he became Bailiff, Coutanche defended an English soldier stationed in the island who was unable to understand a single word of the court proceedings other than his sentence—six months' imprisonment. Shocked by this procedure, Coutanche brought in a Bill urging the optional use of English in criminal cases.

The Bill was rejected by a single vote in the fifty-two-strong parliament but had the effect of prompting Sir William Vernon, who was then Bailiff, to say that he would never refuse an application for the use of English at a trial.

Jersey's senior courts have unlimited jurisdiction, and the Bailiff can order the death penalty for murder. As a divorce court judge, Coutanche recently issued the decree that enabled Sir Francis Cook, the artist baronet, to go ahead with his much-publicized seventh wedding.

Sir Alexander introduced a characteristically colourful touch to his meeting with the Germans when they invaded the Channel Islands in 1940. On the eve of the invasion he received a letter from Sir Alexander Maxwell, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, instructing him to stay at his post and administer the government of the island to the best of his ability during the enemy occupation. Nazi troops landed in bright sunshine on July 1, and soon jackboots were crunching up the gravel drive of Coutanche's home. A party of German officers marched into the house and stood surveying the pictures on the walls. Then Coutanche entered. They turned and stared at him in surprise.

The "Ruler" of Jersey was wearing an old

In Jersey's parliament Sir Alexander Coutanche, the president, sits behind a mace presented by Charles II in 1663

Sir Alexander inspects the hobby horse at a recent folk dance display in St. Helier. He is Jersey's sixty-sixth Bailiff

When the Queen—then Princess Elizabeth—visited Jersey in 1949, Sir Alexander escorted her. This week the Bailiff will be her host again

shirt and a pair of muddy trousers with a hole at one knee. Facing a moment fraught with frustration and as unenviable as any that could have been wished on a man of action, he had gone into the garden to soothe his feelings by pulling up weeds.

During the immediate postwar period, while food rationing was still in force, Coutanche went to London and talked Board of Trade officials into allowing Jersey's traditional food trade with France to be resumed, so that islanders could build up strength after their period of near-starvation under the Germans. During the Suez crisis he again flew to England and persuaded officials to allow Jersey to operate its own rationing scheme—this time for petrol, which, ironically, was allocated less sparingly in the little island than in Britain.

Jersey's modern Bailiff, still holding his ancient powers and traditional privileges, administers a government influenced by the trade unions as well as the business interests of the island. Coutanche, who was a friend both of Ernest Bevin and Arthur Deakin, once postponed a holiday to preside at a conference between union members and employers when building workers threatened to start Jersey's first major strike in recent years. Although president of an almost exclusively Conservative-thinking parliament, his views have been described as "leftish." He makes no comment himself.

One day near Christmas, Coutanche set out in snow to drive a woman member of his household staff to the home of her mother, who was ill. Before they had gone very far, his car skidded on the icy road and crashed. Stopping a passing motorist, the Bailiff asked him to take the woman on to her destination. Then he phoned for a police car to get him to work. It was one of the few times when he has been driven from his home to his chambers in St. Helier, for he does not employ a chauffeur, and uses a small saloon car of the same make as his wife's.

Coutanche believes in mixing and making friends wherever he goes. He declares: "If there is one lesson life has taught me above others it is the importance of getting to know people and to understand their points of view. There are few problems, whatever the scale, that cannot be resolved in friendship by men of goodwill."

Lady Coutanche, a slender, energetic woman who has known Sir Alexander since they were in their teens, enjoys sharing her husband's hectic life. The daughter of an Irishman, she was brought up on the small Channel Island of Herm, where she formed an enduring fondness and understanding of animals. Today the Coutanche home above the sea is shared by two large dogs which romp from room to room with cushions in their jaws, and curl up to sleep in the armchairs. One of them, a shaggy Belgian sheepdog, was the puppy of a dog brought to the Channel Islands by German troops. Lady Coutanche gave him a home after the liberation and changed his name from Karl to Charlie.

Off duty, the Coutanches enjoy swimming in the warm Gulf Stream that laps on to the beach below their home, playing an occasional game of golf, or spending an evening at the cinema. The Bailiff had a strong desire to ensure that films shown should not offend any section of the public. His belief in getting people together to talk things over was put to the test again. Calling a meeting of the managers of Jersey's five cinemas, Coutanche put them on their honour to hold a monthly conference among themselves and voluntarily to ban pictures which the majority considered unsuitable for showing.

The personal approach paid. The scheme has worked ever since—without a single complaint from the islanders. THE END

Sir Alexander and Lady Coutanche's garden overlooks St. Helier. Their dogs are George, a setter, and Charlie, a Belgian sheepdog

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Packing the punch in apples

by JEROME HOOD

There's still a great deal to learn about it . . . . For apple wine is a living thing and might hit you back

Jack Ward tests a new batch of cider in the laboratory at Horam. He and Ian Howie began making cider in a garage. Later they moved the growing business to a haunted manor house

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

EARLY one Sunday morning in September, 1951, Ian Howie went out into the grounds of his Sussex manor to inspect a newly erected giant cider storage vat. Nine thousand gallons of high-proof cider were in the vat, and in the unusually warm weather he feared that fermentation might be too rapid.

As he drew near the vat, a curious churning noise and a high-pitched whistle made him glance quickly at the pressure gauge. What he saw sent him hurrying up the iron ladder. The needle, indicating the interior pressure, had swung past the red mark and was hard up against the stop.

On top of the tank he found the source of the whistle. A needle jet of cider was shooting out of the safety valve at tremendous velocity—a jet far too narrow to release the obvious pressure. He realized that the valve must have become clogged, and that if he didn't act quickly the whole lot might go up.

The vat had cost £1,260, and the contents were worth £2,000. Howie and his partner, Jack Ward, had sunk most of their capital in it. It looked as if he would have to unbatten the manhole cover—a highly dangerous undertaking, but there seemed no other way out.

Climbing down the ladder, he ran to the house to telephone Ward, and then returned to the vat.

When Ward arrived, he found Howie drenched to the skin and clinging to the top of the vat like a drugged fly. A column of cider had shot into the air, almost washing him off. Several hundred gallons were deposited in the drive. Howie was intoxicated with the fumes.

It was not the first time that the apple had struck back at them. The year before, a large stock of cider, after undergoing the same process as the rest of the brew, had turned into vinegar.

"We didn't know why at the time," Howie confesses, "and it couldn't happen now, but air must have got into contact with it. Apple wine is a living thing, and there's still a great deal to learn about it."

The partners have been learning, in a somewhat high-spirited way, most of their lives. Ian Howie, forty-three, a tall, thin man with a donnish sense of humour, and Jack Ward, forty-seven—in appearance a younger version of the Archbishop of Canterbury—are joint owners of the Merrydown Wine Company, Limited.

Their explosive product—Merrydown Vintage Cider—has brought a subtle change to the sleepy Sussex countryside. Four times the strength of normal cider, just about one-third the strength of good neat whisky, the drink is still being sold by the pint in many pubs where the locals have not yet got over its deceptively mild taste.

"Bicycles have been ridden backwards immense distances," says Howie, "because publicans still serve it as an ordinary cider instead of in wine glasses. It takes a long time to instil a proper respect for the drink."

Vintage cider, unlike the normal brew, is made by adding sugar and wine yeast, and allowing it to ferment for several months instead of arresting the process. Sugar is used as a sweetener.

Howie and Ward started operations commercially in 1946 in the garage of Ward's house, which was called Merrydown, but they had begun experimenting years before as neighbours in Eastbourne.

One series of experiments, with red currants, was conducted in an outhouse next to the surgery of Howie's father, a local doctor. It came to an abrupt end when the doctor protested that the smell of liquor and the blood-like stains were getting the place a bad name.

LATER, as a prisoner of war in Italy and Germany, Howie experimented further. Persuading his fellow prisoners to hand over their Red Cross prunes and raisins, he concocted weird but stimulating drinks that helped to relieve the tedium. When he was finally liberated, he brought back as a present for Ward a bottle of vintage hock, Niersteiner '21.

It was as they drank this bottle that Ward suddenly recalled that some of their early wine was still maturing in a cellar. They tried a bottle, thought that it compared favourably with the Niersteiner, and decided to enter the wine trade.

Howie bought four tons of apples, Ward borrowed a two hundred year old press from a local farmer, and they set to work. "We made 450 gallons—and then I set out to sell it," Howie

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Howie (left) and Ernest Ward, the foreman, inspect giant cider storage vats. The fumes once intoxicated Howie at the top of a vat

It paid O'Mara to take the señorita to her death. Would he dare to save her now . . . and lose all?

PASSAGE FROM TRINIDAD

by JOHN SALT

ILLUSTRATED BY WYLES

BERNARD O'MARA, a large-limbed, flame-haired, wild young man, was well aware that the times called for positive action and that there was little to be gained by staring gloomily at the harbour from Louisette's Benbow Bar in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Yet that was what he continued to do, and the fact that he was contemplating the sale of his motor schooner Kestrel for ready cash betrayed how far his fortunes had declined.

With her powerful diesels and armour-plated bridge, Kestrel was the final link with happier days when O'Mara had run strange cargoes from Trujillo City to the Florida Keys and had come to know and love the Caribbean islands. During those pleasant years he learned the shoals and the reefs, the deep-water channels and the tide-rips as a blind man learns the position of an obstacle simply by feeling its presence in his mind's eye. O'Mara could make any landfall without reference to a chart and he knew to a fraction the depth of water beneath his keel at any given point.

Now Kestrel might have to go, and with her his one-man crew, Lucien Desaix. And that was a pity, for together they made a good team which should be useful to somebody. But to whom? O'Mara bought a *Cuba Libre* to assist his study of the problem.

The change in his luck came unexpectedly—as it always did—with the entrance of Julius Meinl, a new arrival in the island. O'Mara knew Meinl slightly and admired him less. He was a pug-faced little South German with thick pebble glasses screwed into the fat around his eyes and a rubbery red mouth encradling a set of gold-filled teeth. With him was his wife, Hulda, a tall, awkwardly-boned woman. She was dressed in a faded khaki blouse and skirt topped ridiculously by a solar topee.

The Germans sat down at O'Mara's table without invitation, and he found himself fascinated by Hulda's face. It seemed unfair that one woman should have so much against her: the countenance of granite weathered and eroded by time, the cleft, spade-shaped chin, the uncompromising eyes. O'Mara looked at her and sighed for the girls back home in Ireland.

"Good morning, Captain," said Meinl in his high, oddly pedantic voice. "Will you have a drink with me?"

O'Mara somewhat ungraciously indicated his empty glass. The German signalled to Louisette. Then he coughed nervously and tried again. "Business is good, Captain?"

A hopeful flicker awoke in O'Mara's sea-faded blue eyes. "I have no business any longer."

"You have a schooner," Hulda said, fixing him with a chill stare.

"So what? I have no cargo."

Meinl smiled like a sleepy cat and laid a hand upon Louisette's arm as she was about to take the rum bottle back to the bar. "Leave it on the table," he said. Then he turned to O'Mara again. "It is possible, Captain, that I can help you to a cargo. I say possible, because there are details to be arranged."

O'Mara became very alert. When he spoke it was with caution born of experience.

"I had heard that Captain L'Ouverture was under contract to you," he said. "Have you then enough business for two of us?"

Meinl showed all his gold teeth in a wider smile. "Unfortunately Monsieur L'Ouverture is not available. He is, as all the world knows, indisposed."

"Very much indisposed," said O'Mara dryly. "With a bullet through one lung. The details of his accident are obscure."

Meinl nodded sadly. "Some shooting affray in the lower harbour perhaps. As you remark, the thing is not well understood."

He drank slowly, then shot an acute glance at O'Mara. "Tell me, Captain, how much do you owe in harbour dues on your schooner? I have heard it said that they mean to impound her before the week is out."

"Your hearing is excellent," O'Mara said grimly.

"You are then without funds?"

O'Mara shrugged. "I make no secret of it. Hadn't you better tell me your racket?"

Meinl clicked his tongue distastefully. "Your description is not apt, my friend. Indeed, it offends me. The thing that I have in mind is rather an errand of mercy, a service to assist a comrade. Is that not so, Hulda, my dear?"

The woman never took her eyes off O'Mara. "He isn't interested in that," she said. "He just wants to know how much."

O'Mara grinned at her and drank his rum. "The lady is right. I have a ship to fuel and a man to pay. What's in it for me?"

Meinl watched him steadily. "I will pay your debts," he said. "I will free Kestrel and provision her. A salary will be paid to yourself and your man while you work for me. And at the end there will be a handsome present."

"How handsome?"

"That will depend entirely upon the worth of your services."

O'Mara thought for only a moment. He was in no position to argue terms. "Okay," he said. "What's the job?"

MEINL sighed, and even Hulda seemed to relax a little. Lowering his voice, Meinl said: "You will be required to carry two persons from point A—in this case Huevos Island—to point B, off the mainland. There your passengers will be picked up by a larger vessel and we shall return here with you. It is fair to warn you that your passengers will be without benefit of passport and that therefore you will bend the law a little, but not the law of this colony."

He produced a folded chart from his wallet and spread it on the table, his yellow index finger tracing a route along the seaboard of Venezuela to a point south of the Orinoco delta.

"There," he said. "That is our rendezvous."

O'Mara pushed Meinl's finger away so that he could see the name on the map that the German's hand had concealed. He studied the tiny rectangle of green and brown for a moment. Then he said: "Chinantla del Mar; a banana republic. There was a revolution there recently."

"How can I help?" the girl asked. Her eyes flashed with sudden hope and she held tightly to his arm

Meinl spread his hands resignedly. "You touch the spot, Captain. But the new government of this poor country is not a stable one, I fear. There is a strong resistance movement whose exiled leader has until recently found refuge in Huevos Island. Now he wishes to return, and I, with your help, have undertaken to convey him. Does that answer your questions?"

O'Mara nodded. "I'm satisfied," he said. "So long as you're telling me the truth, I'll play along with you."

Meinl refolded his chart and put it away with a great show of briskness. "Well then, it is

Continued on page 37

One man saves your bus fares

Driving without a conductor he cuts fare dodging, running costs—and stair climbing

by KEITH ELLIS

Driver Robert Pilgrim takes a fare on a Huddersfield one-man bus. Last year these buses saved the town an estimated £9,500

FOR thousands of bus passengers, the familiar letters P.A.Y.E. are the symbol of a revolution which is quietly transforming British public transport. They are painted on bus doorways and they stand for Pay As You Enter. They mean that the bus is in the sole charge of a driver who collects fares and looks after the passengers without the help of a conductor.

Today more and more operators are running one-man buses. London, Manchester, Huddersfield, Sunderland, Glasgow and Hull have them. So do such private companies as Western Welsh, Midland Red, Lincolnshire Road Car, Southdown, Maidstone and District, and Aldershot and District.

Drivers find little difficulty in combining the two jobs. Robert Pilgrim, a Huddersfield driver, recently heard two men swearing violently in the saloon. Normally, the conductor would have dealt with them, but Pilgrim was unable to leave his cab. Rounding a bend he noticed a police sergeant and a constable in his headlights. He pulled up and told them that he was having trouble. The men were reduced to silence by a few words from the sergeant. "Do you want us to turn them off?" he asked the driver. It was the last bus, and Pilgrim said that they could stay on. "But I arranged to telephone the police from the next village if there was any more of it."

Drivers like one-manning. There is always a waiting list for vacancies. As senior men with above-average ability, they enjoy both the variety of work and the extra fifteen per cent wages agreed by the transport unions and municipal undertakings.

Most one-man buses have been designed to make the driver's job as easy as possible. The engine is under the floor and the cab is set well back in the saloon. Its glass-plated side faces the bus entrance.

The passenger asks for his ticket through a hole in the glass and places his money on a tray lower down. The driver presses a lever on an automatic ticket machine, tears off the ticket and places it on a second tray. Another machine, worked by a series of keys, delivers change.

Hag-ridden by ever-rising costs and an acute shortage of labour, bus operators also like one-man buses. They cut the wage bill. They save on uniforms, insurance, welfare, superannuation and medical expenses. Since each passenger pays his fare on entering they eliminate fare-dodging. The total saving averages 4d. a mile, seventeen per cent of the cost of running a two-man bus.

The present trend started six years ago. Before then one-man buses had worked remote country routes, but they had been limited in size to twenty-six seats. In 1951 a change in the law enabled larger single-deck buses to be built. One-man buses could now work on much busier routes.

The first big authority to take advantage was Huddersfield. As an experiment, Harold Muscroft, the shrewd, dapper general manager, put two one-man single-deckers on the rugged Huddersfield - Scholes - Slaithwaite - Marsden route. Eighteen miles long and passing through sparsely populated areas in the foothills of the Pennines, it had always lost money. But with the coming of one-man buses the loss has changed to a balance.

Since then, Muscroft has put one-man buses on five other routes. The longest, a round trip, lasts three hours; the shortest, a city service, only fifteen minutes.

Other operators have been quick to follow Huddersfield's lead. Manchester and Sunderland have put one-man buses on runs to new estates where two-man services would be uneconomic and Halifax converted an existing single-decker for a one-man shuttle service between Cragg Vale and Mytholmroyd.

There are disadvantages in one-manning. A driver-conductor cannot easily check passengers who have ridden farther than they have paid for. Nor can he help with children or luggage or run a rural parcels service.

In Britain, where the law still restricts the size of single-deckers to forty-four seats and where most of the population travel regularly by bus, double-deckers will always be necessary. The transport authorities, the bus operators and the transport unions will not allow one-man double-deckers because the responsibility would be too much for the driver.

At Huddersfield, Muscroft has calculated that it would be worth while replacing a double-decker fleet with a greater number of single-deckers only if the proportionate increase in the number of buses required was not more than seven to six. This cuts out most routes at present worked by double-deckers.

But for routes which normally require single-deckers—country routes, the less busy town routes and routes which pass under low bridges—one-man buses will become more and more common. "I'm going to convert all my single-decker fleet," says Muscroft. "I can't imagine anyone buying single-deckers and *not* having one-man operation." THE END

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I REFUSED TO DIE · 3

Ambushed — on a slow boat to safety

by IAN MacHORTON

Miraculously I caught up with my comrades on the bank of the swirling Irrawaddy. In a leaky, rotting dugout we paddled over the mile-wide waters—right into disaster

DESPERATELY, I tried to keep calm and work out what had happened. From the jungle-clad slope on which I stood, two hundred miles behind the Japanese lines in Burma, the trail which I was following led down into the village of Tagaung.

I had hoped that by the time I reached Tagaung, which was on the bank of the Irrawaddy River, I would have rejoined my Chindit column and my immediate troubles would have been over.

The reunion meant everything to me. I had not seen my comrades since the day a few weeks earlier, in March, 1943, when they had been compelled to abandon me because I was too badly wounded to walk.

Now, on my feet again but exhausted by tiredness and hunger, I had covered miles of desert and jungle in a desperate race to catch up with them on their journey out of Burma into India.

I knew that I had to get in touch with them before they crossed the Irrawaddy; the river was so wide and fast-flowing that I had no chance of crossing it by myself.

The imprints leading down the slope were definitely those of British boots, and they mingled with native footprints among the houses and shops But Tagaung seemed completely deserted. The village was wrapped in a mysterious stillness.

What was the reason? Was I too late for the crossing? Or had the Japs been waiting there for the column to arrive? Perhaps all of my comrades had been killed or captured, and the

On the village outskirts a Burmese grabbed my arm, pulling me into the jungle. I went without a struggle, even though he might betray me to the Japs

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARDS

villagers had fled in terror to escape from the fighting.

I made a sudden decision. My position was too desperate to worry much about further risk. I had to take a chance. Climbing to my feet, I half-ran, half-staggered down through the trees.

As soon as I entered the outskirts of the village I heard excited chattering. Before I could guess what it meant, a Burmese clad in a *lungyi*—an ankle-length, skirt-like garment—rushed out from the shadows and seized my arm. He was very excited and started to drag me along the road.

I had no idea what was happening, but went without a struggle. I ought to have realized that he might well have been pulling me in among a patrol of Japanese soldiers to claim a reward.

With his hand still tugging at my arm, I stumbled along a footpath between two lines of houses. We plunged into a clump of bushes in which I was momentarily lost and bewildered. Then the Burmese suddenly let go of me. He put a hand in the middle of my back—and gave me a push.

I emerged on to a sandy beach bordering the Irrawaddy. Banana trees and bamboos on the bank above it cast deep shadows, so that I was in an eerie half-light. Nevertheless, it was light enough for me to see that I had been thrust into the open directly behind a group of armed men. Their faces showed yellow-green as they turned upon me.

At once I hurled myself down, drawing my revolver. With equal speed, some of the men also flung themselves flat. Others dropped to one knee. The muzzles of a dozen rifles and tommy guns pointed at me.

"By all that's holy! Look who's here!"

The voice of Doc Lusk, a medical officer in my column, broke the silence. Fingers relaxed from triggers. And I wept at the realization that I had, after all, caught up with my comrades.

"You're just in the nick of time, my boy," went on the burly Irish-Canadian, whose instant recognition, despite my wild appearance, had saved my life. "How did you get here? We thought you were a gonner."

Without waiting for a reply, he slapped me on the back and propelled me to the water's edge where some soldiers were waiting.

I had indeed been lucky in arriving when I did.

The last two boat-loads of the column were about to cross the river. One boat was already full, and the other was filling up. Both were very ancient and leaky craft which somehow or other had been successfully hidden by the villagers from the Japs.

Such was my happiness that to me, everything seemed peaceful and lovely. The Irrawaddy looked bright and blue, and I could hear the tinkling of a thousand little bells stirred by the breeze which played round the pagodas in the village.

Doc Lusk interrupted my thoughts to say: "These are the best boats we could get. You get in, Ian. There's plenty of room for one more, I guess."

There were eleven men crammed into it already. It looked so unlikely that the leaky, half-rotten dugout could make the journey even with its existing load that I felt the occupants might legitimately grumble at having to take yet another one.

But I could not have wished for a better welcome. "Didn't expect to see you again, sir," said a young bearded corporal. "Just like a bad penny, aren't you, sir? Except that now you're a penny with a hole in it."

Everyone laughed at this, including myself.

The corporal and another man grabbed and pulled me into the boat. The men packed within its frail sides shuffled to admit me. No sooner had I wriggled into a squatting position than the boat was pushed off. It glided out on to the dancing waters of the Irrawaddy. My companions had a couple of proper paddles and an assortment of others improvised from driftwood.

The motion of the boat was soothing. The sun, now more kindly as it poised on the brink of sunset, cast pale shadows on the sandbanks which at various points in the mainstream emerged to form long islands.

The corporal began to describe what had happened to the column after they had left me wounded. Known simply as "Corp," he was a likeable, good-looking character, not more than twenty-one years old. The skin of his face, neck and arms was burned so black by the sun that he was darker even than a native Burmese. His hair was a rich brown and very long and wavy. I thought that if he stayed in Burma much longer it would be hair of which any girl would be proud.

I could not remember having seen him before, but he seemed to know me. Probably I had acquired some measure of fame because I was the first British officer to be abandoned on account of wounds.

THE corporal said that a four-day, hundred-mile march out of Burma across the Chinese border which the column had tried to make after leaving me ended at the Shweli River. "We tried to cross the river two or three times, but it was always the bloody same. The natives got wind of our coming long before we turned up, and they warned the Japs."

Once the column managed to creep through the jungle to the Shweli River without seeming to be noticed. The river was running extremely fast at that point. A rope was made out of rifle slings and three men tied themselves to it and swam across.

No sooner had they managed to fix it to the opposite bank than the Japs arrived, opening up at once with rifles and machine-guns. The three who had crossed were killed, and so were others who by then had entered the water.

After that, the column tried to make a raft, but the Japs came through the jungle on the column's side of the Shweli River. The subsequent battle ended with the column pushing back into a ridge of hills to think out the next move.

"The Japs got Captain Wetherall, the dirty little blighters!" the corporal added reflectively. "He was leading a charge that tore right into

From Dimapur, the Chindits marched into Burma, behind enemy lines. MacHorton was wounded near Mong Mit, and left in the jungle. On an improvised crutch he started to walk to China

Doc Lusk, MacHorton's medical officer, with nurses at Calcutta. Lusk was captured by the Japs at Tagaung, and died in a prison camp

them like hell. It sent them running fit to bust. But a machine-gunner in the undergrowth got him."

Immediately, I recalled an incident involving Captain Vivian Wetherall which had made a deep impression on me when we were in India waiting for the start of the expedition. A party of us went to a club for dinner. Vivian was there, and it was with obvious pride that he introduced us to his mother. A charming woman in her late forties, she had a quiet yet intense voice.

Several of us in the party knew Vivian's mother well and had been impressed by her talent for foretelling the future.

After a while, she was asked to read our palms. Most of us were eager for this. Despite the lightheartedness of the evening, we were anxious for some hint of what lay ahead. "It will be difficult for you," she told the first volunteer, "but do not be afraid. It will be all right, ultimately."

She said much the same to most of the others who thrust their palms before her. Then Vivian was spotted returning from the bar with a round of drinks.

"Come on," someone called. "It's *your* turn now."

Vivian came into the circle to face his mother. Suddenly her face clouded. "Read my son's hand?" she said. "Certainly not. I know too much about him already."

At that we all laughed, and set to teasing him about what he had done on his last leave. But the smile that had accompanied his mother's remark had been a forced one. And I had left the party with a curious feeling of apprehension.

Now Vivian was dead. . . .

Beaten back from the Shweli, the column had changed its plans and turned south for its present bid to reach India. It had arrived on the bank of the Irrawaddy only that morning, and had soon discovered that the Japs had rounded up the boats for miles around and had towed them away out of reach. All the same, Major Dunlop, the leader of the column, had managed literally to unearth the two which were being used for the crossing.

"There must be Japs about," declared the corporal with breezy disdain. "Lieutenant Wormell took a section to the bridgehead this morning and about an hour later we heard a burst of Bren gun fire. Afterwards there was silence. In fact, Mr. Wormell and the section haven't been seen or heard of since. Odd, ain't it, sir?"

I turned to look at the other boat. It seemed to be going very slowly, and had dropped behind so that it was barely a quarter of the way across, while we were more than half-way over. The flashing of mess tins in the evening sunlight showed that its occupants were baling.

"Leaks like a sieve, sir," the corporal broke in. "We've expected her sink all day long. But so far she hasn't. A miracle, I call it."

Another of my bearded companions spoke up. "How long do you think it will take us to get back to India, sir?"

"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps a fortnight," was the best—and most encouraging—answer I could give.

As far as I could estimate, we still had something like two hundred miles to cover, much of it through heartbreaking jungle. By now the Japanese had gained much experience in hunting Chindits.

We were probably the last column on the way out. The others which had gone before had given the yellow men plenty of opportunities to stalk, to snipe and to ambush.

The Irrawaddy was only the first of the big river barriers in our obstacle race. The Mu and Chindwin lay across our route and were sure to be watched. At every likely crossing place there would be Japs and, as on the Irrawaddy, the local boats would have been taken away. Most of the natives would have been bribed or bullied into betraying us or denying us food.

If things had gone according to plan, as much food, equipment and medical supplies as we wanted would have been

"I wish he'd stop his confounded singing"

parachuted to us. But the column's radio transmitter had been wrecked in battle, and our headquarters in India had no idea where to find us.

"Does anyone know the date today?" I asked.

There was a murmuring as men who had been so long in a jungle world tried to calculate this simple detail.

"I think it's April the thirteenth," replied one of the soldiers, "though I may have missed crossing off a few days in my diary." He pushed the tattered diary back into a pocket of his shirt.

THOUGHT—1

Men suffer from thinking more than anything else.

Leo Tolstoy

April the thirteenth! That meant we had been behind the enemy lines for exactly sixty-six days. For more than two months we had existed on food that, at its best, was no more than half rations. Oh God, how much more of this was there to be?

A thought struck me. If, in fact, it was April the thirteenth, today was my twentieth birthday. A year ago almost to the day I had arrived in India. I was an eager schoolboy then. Now I was a battle-weary soldier.

"Come on, sir! Wakey! Wakey! We've only a hundred yards to go."

It was the voice of the corporal, interrupting the sleep of exhaustion into which I had fallen.

The next thing I heard was the terrifying noise of a Japanese machine-gun. It was as though the corporal's call had been a signal for the Japs to open fire from a hiding place in the undergrowth on the bank ahead. A gun was firing so loudly that it seemed almost on top of me. The water around the boat seethed as the bullets poured into it. Some of them ricocheted off the surface and whined away into the distance behind us.

The men in the boat turned into frantic animals. The boy who had told me the date was slumped over the side, his hair floating on the water. Blood poured out of his mouth to colour the Irrawaddy with a widening circle of red. A man up forward had been hurled backwards by the impact of bullets and had collapsed on to his comrades amidships. Blood spurted from his wounds in separate jets like a barrel of wine in which holes had been punched.

Then the boat capsized. I clung to the upturned hulk, into which bullets were thudding inches from my head. Providentially, it began to swing round, shielding me from the enemy fire. The safest thing to do, I decided, was to stay where I was. Quite apart from the need to take cover, I did not feel that my wounded leg would stand swimming the remaining hundred yards.

My pack had gone to the bottom of the river. My boots and revolver belt began to weigh me down, but I was loathe to part with them. The boat was drifting downstream and towards the shore. I held on with all the strength I possessed.

The bullets ceased to whip around me. I could not be seen from the west bank, and no doubt the Japs believed that all in the river had been killed. I could hear a battle raging along the shore just inside the jungle. Bren and tommy guns were barking answers to Japanese automatics. I saw three of our men crawl out of the undergrowth on to a mud bank upstream to help to drag survivors from our boat into the cover of the trees.

The men on the bank seemed to be immune from the Japanese fire, which was aimed directly at them. Even at the distance I was from them I could hear the bullets tearing into the mud, and see spurts going up like small bomb bursts. All the men managed to clamber up to merge with the black shadows of the jungle.

I turned my head and saw that the other boat, captained by Doc Lusk, must have been little more than halfway across when the shooting started. It had turned round at once and was now well on the way back to Tagaung. Its occupants would get out of this affair safely, I told myself. I was not to know that the Japs had entered Tagaung and were waiting for the boat to return. Doc and his companions were to be captured, and he was to die in the hell of a prison camp.

WHEN I was within ten yards of the beach on the bank of the Irrawaddy, and had drifted well downstream of the ambush, I decided that I could risk leaving the boat. I pushed off and struck out through the swirling waters. Pain shot through my hip at the strain imposed upon my damaged muscles, but I was able to keep going. I reached the bank and crawled across it. Then I drew myself up into the jungle.

I was conscious of two things—a feeling of complete tiredness, and the sensation caused by the water in my boots pouring through the eyelets.

I ripped off the sealing tape on a waterproof box of cartridges that I still had with me, and reloaded my revolver. The six wet rounds that had been in the revolver I threw into the river. As I rose to my feet a voice suddenly hailed me from the shadows.

"Hey! Wait for me, sir!"

It was the corporal. He was swimming towards the bank, his rifle slung across his shoulders. As he grounded on the mud I reached down to help to drag him ashore. Instantly he slipped his rifle over his head and loaded it.

"And what do we do now, sir?" he asked, shaking his hair out of his eyes.

"Stick together," I replied. "We've no food, no money and no maps, and there's a couple of hundred miles to go. But if we stick together, I reckon we'll make it."

"Don't be so ruddy depressing," said the corporal. "I've got five rupees and an escape map. Last week I traded a packet of biscuits with a sergeant for the map. He said he didn't want to die hungry. I reckon I did a good deal."

"We're O.K. then. I've got a compass," I said, feeling much more confident. "Come on, let's go."

The battle had now developed into a running fight which appeared to be on every side of us. The column had dispersed into twos and threes. It was a case of every man for himself.

We doubled westwards into the jungle, clawing through clumps of bamboo and banana and palm thickets. The keen-edged leaves of creepers cut our faces almost to the bone, but we took little notice of this in our desperation to force a way out of the trap which the Japs were closing round us. We pushed on for ten minutes until we came to a hillock.

It was covered more thickly with

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undergrowth than the surrounding area. We crawled right into the middle of the undergrowth and lay gasping for breath. When we could talk we set about making a definite plan of escape.

The plan we agreed on was that we would wait a little while until night had come and the moon had risen. By then, we estimated, the Japs would have left the district to chase other survivors of the column.

When night had come, a crashing in the jungle, which I calculated to be some two hundred yards away, caused us to freeze into silence. I slipped my revolver from its holster. There was a click as the corporal pushed forward the safety catch on his rifle.

The crashing came nearer. I pushed my hat to the back of my head and peered forward cautiously. A few minutes later a British soldier, his left arm swinging grotesquely, staggered into a clearing below us. As he did so, the moon rose and filled the scene with a ghostly light-effect.

I called softly to him. He reeled to a stop directly beneath our hideout, as unsteady as a drunken man. His beard, broad and shaggy, framed his wide-open mouth, and he had the crazed look of a man screaming soundlessly. His eyes were staring in horror. His clothing was nearly saturated with blood.

Before I could recover from the revulsion which assailed me, the corporal had run down to him. He guided the wounded soldier up to our refuge. A machine-gun bullet had shattered the man's left arm below the elbow. Another, I found, had passed into his body, striking a bottom rib. There was a hole a few inches below his right shoulder blade where it had burst out of him.

I TOOK a morphine needle from my ammunition pouch, tore off the protecting seal and jabbed the needle into the soldier's arm while the corporal gave him a drink of water. The man stopped moaning and appeared to recover a little. "There are others back there—wounded," he said. Then, suddenly, he slumped into a drugged sleep.

The corporal looked at me. I looked at him. Each of us knew what the other was thinking. Should we leave this wounded soldier, for he was obviously beyond aid, and go on by ourselves? The two of us together might stand a chance of getting through the Japs. Or should we take the risk of going back towards the river bank?

I suppose it was my own bitter experience of being left behind wounded that decided the issue in my mind. I felt compelled to go through the motions, at least, of seeing whether there was anything I could do for the wounded men.

"Come on, Corporal. Let's go and look," I said.

"O.K., sir."

And without the slightest hesitation he turned in the direction the soldier had indicated.

The trail was all too easy to follow. In addition to broken twigs and bent creepers there were black splashes where blood had poured from him as he staggered through the undergrowth.

Suddenly, we heard the murmur of voices. Forgetting all the need for caution, I said: "They're British."

"Not so loud," hissed the corporal. "It might be a Japanese trap. We'd better go carefully, sir."

We dropped to our hands and knees and crawled forward. The murmur grew louder as we came to a clearing and peered through the undergrowth at a small circle of British and Gurkha troops who were gathered there beside a stream in the ghostly light of the moon.

A tall man, a sergeant, stood in the centre of the group. His attitude was belligerent. He carried his left arm in a blood-soiled sling. He had a mop of shaggy hair thrusting out from beneath his battered bush hat, and a full and jutting beard added to the overall impression of great strength, both of physique and character.

He talked in low but authoritative tones to the rest of the little company, some of whom squatted at his feet while others were stretched out in a state of exhaustion.

"I don't want your honest opinion"

Snatches of the conversation drifted to me. "I'm not leaving any of you behind," I heard the sergeant say. "We're going to get out of this God-damned country, and we're going to go out on our own feet. So get on them and get going, every one of you!"

He bent aggressively over a soldier who was lying at his feet, and with his sound arm, caught at his shirt. He gave it a wrench as though to pull the man to his feet, but the man resisted him and the fabric tore to leave a tattered strip in the big man's hand.

"Leave me alone, blast you! I'm not going any farther," snarled the soldier on the ground. "I've had enough. I'm all for being a p.o.w. Whatever the Japs do to me nothing can be worse than this bloody caper."

"He's dead right, Sarge," another voice joined in rebelliously. "The column's gone off and left us. They couldn't care less whether we live or die. So I say we surrender."

For a moment I felt that the dramatic scene I was witnessing was none of my business, and the most sensible thing for the corporal and me to do was to leave this mutinous band to their own devices. After all, if they chose to give themselves up, and risk all that went with surrender to the Japs, that was their own look-out.

It was, I suppose, at that moment that I became a man, and the last vestige of the boy-soldier who was content merely to be led fell away from me. I knew that I had to intervene; I had to assume the command that my officer's rank required of me.

I gripped the corporal's arm. "Come on," I whispered. "This is where we step in."

Together we rose to our feet and pushed our way into the clearing. All eyes turned towards us in consternation, and hands immediately slid to the triggers of rifles and tommy guns. I had reckoned on the moonlight being bright enough to show that we were British. Luckily, it was. The tension vanished and gave place to expectancy.

As much as possible I strove to hide my limp and make my entry an authoritative one. The sergeant recognized me. He straightened up, as if he were going to give a salute, which would have been contrary to Chindit battle regulations, but he checked himself in time and said, "Hallo, sir!"

"The corporal and I have been sent back for you." I lied. "I am your commanding officer now. We are going back to India and should catch up with the rest of the column soon."

I could sense at once that what I had said had produced the desired effect on the men, though a wary look from the sergeant told me that he had not been deceived. Nevertheless, his eyes twinkled with gratitude and he said nothing.

The rebellion had been quelled. The pathetic little band of men were once again Chindits.

"What is your name, Sergeant?" I asked.

"Hayes, sir. Of the R.A.F. section," he replied briskly. He told me that he had eleven men, including four Gurkhas.

"Right then!" I ordered. "Let's have everyone sorted out so that we can be on our way."

Quite apart from my personal eagerness to start westwards, I could see the group had to be got going quickly. Above the stench of their sweat-sodden clothing, by now little more than rags, the air was rancid with the smell of dried blood. All of them had suppurating jungle sores which had eaten down to their bones.

When the sergeant took me round to have a closer look at his men we discovered that two of the Gurkhas and one British soldier had already died where they lay. The Briton was grinning horribly, as though in his last conscious moment he had seen in my assertion that we would march to India some quite impossible joke.

Of the rest, two were very badly wounded in the chest and could not walk in any circumstances. The remaining men, although all wounded, could hobble along—at least, until their gaunt, starved frames folded up. That, from the look of them, could be any time now.

Sergeant Hayes was probably the worst of the walking cases. His arm which was in the sling had been almost smashed by a burst of Jap machine-gun fire, and a long gash right across his face told of savage close combat fighting. He must have been in continuous pain, but he never flinched or mentioned his injuries.

"How did you all come to be here?" I asked him.

"Oh," he replied casually, "I just got them together after we were fired on at the river crossing and I brought 'em to this clearing."

The full story of how he "just got them together" I learned later. Instead of pressing on westwards, as he was entitled to do, he had, during the first lull in the firing, scoured the entire battle area to look for wounded. With great dash and bravery he had interrupted a number of running fights and pulled out the wounded to save them from almost certain bayoneting. It was while he was doing this, and dragging them to the clearing, that he had been hit in the arm.

I told him about the wounded man we had left on the hillock. "Poor devil!" said the sergeant. "He just went mad with the pain and screamed out that he was going home. He rushed into the jungle and that was the last I saw of him. I guessed he hadn't long to live, so I let him go. I felt it was the kindest way out."

WITH remarkable speed considering their condition some of the men set to work with bamboo poles and creepers to make stretchers for the two who could not walk. Meanwhile, Sergeant Hayes and I sorted out the arms and ammunition and allocated them so that each of us could be as effective a fighting man as wounds and physical weakness permitted.

Except for the men on stretchers there was a rifle for everyone. The ammunition worked out at about thirty rounds per man. I swapped Sergeant Hayes's rifle for my revolver because he was now able to use only one hand.

Then we set about rationing the food. Our total provisions amounted to about 4 lb. of rice—sufficient for one cupped handful to each man. We also shared out the silver rupees with which we had been issued for buying food from villagers. This gave each one of us eight rupees.

As far as direction finding was concerned, I had a compass and the corporal had a handkerchief map. These two aids together were quite ample for our needs.

As soon as we were ready I told Sergeant Hayes to get his men to their feet. I led off my new command and stepped from the clearing into the darkness of the jungle.

Once again, we were on our way to the Chindwin—and, we hoped, the safety of India.

NEXT WEEK: I am wounded in battle and captured by the Japs

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E 104/7

Sandy was a soldier's boy

Continued from page 15

lightning flow of strength, and the stone flew up and up against the hills, sparkling and spinning in the sun for ever till it dipped and fell and fell right into a patch of heather.

Geordie put on his coat again. "I've a weasel trap down yonder," he said. "I'll see you off the premises." He might have let them catch the other two to make the colonel's twenty; but then Sandy thought it might not be like Geordie to do that.

Sandy and Sheila followed Geordie and his black bitch Bess past the white water and the deep, dark pools and down to the rusty fence.

Sandy and Sheila climbed the fence, so they were back in Altnadean and Geordie was standing in Drumfechan. "If I was you," said muckle Geordie, "I wouldn't just mention where you caught the trout. But no more poaching, mind!"

Sandy and Sheila shook their heads. "Thanks a million," Sandy said. "Thanks a quadrillion," Sheila said.

"It's the laird you should be after thanking," Geordie said. "Tight lines, then!" Which was the fisherman's good luck, or a fisherman's goodbye, or anything. Geordie turned along the fence, but then he turned back, for something had caught his eagle eye, and the something was Miss Abigail, rounding the last bend on the path beside the burn.

Geordie drew in his breath and sort of braced himself like for a charge, as Miss Abigail's neighbours were apt to do when Miss Abigail appeared. She had Susan with her for a small holiday from the pups. Miss Abigail had said that she might walk up to meet them, but what with this and that and everything, Sandy and Sheila had forgotten all about Miss Abigail.

"Good day to you, George," Miss Abigail said. She seemed real pleased to see him; well, no wonder, seeing Geordie.

"Good day, Miss Abigail," Geordie said, pleased too, but cautious.

Susan and Bess were saying hallo, and they were pleased to see each other, being friends and cousins.

Geordie in his bright Drumfechan tweed, and Miss Abigail in the Altnadean—they were as different as chalk from cheese—and yet there was a sameness with the hill about them, Sandy thought.

"How's Jean?" she asked. "And how's small George?"

"Fine, thanks, Miss Abigail," said Geordie. "Miss Abigail looks well."

"I'm a hopeless old crock," she said. Miss Abigail looked as healthy as some old ruddy apple. "Well, all right, really, thank you, George." She waited a moment and then she said quite sharp: "What of Drumfechan?"

"The laird is fine," said Geordie, "except for the wee twinges whiles the laird suffers in his right big toe."

"We all know the cause of gout," she said. There was a wickedness then about Miss Abigail, whatever gout might be.

Geordie gave Miss Abigail an ice-cold look. He did not say a word.

"Sorry, George," she said. "These things slip out. Please don't glower at me."

So then they laughed, and then they had a crack about the need for rain, and then they agreed it was scandalous no shooting was allowed within ten miles of the Secret Place—the Installation, was what they called it—but not too bad a thing perhaps, with grouse none too plentiful this year.

Then Miss Abigail said: "George, I do wish you would use your vast influence with Drumfechan to have this fence repaired. Only this afternoon I counted twenty of your sheep in Altnadean. If it goes on much longer, I shall impound them. . . ." Miss Abigail had a gleam in her eye again.

So did Geordie. "Would the fence not be half Miss Abigail's?" he asked.

"Drumfechan has five times as many sheep. It's his responsibility to keep them in. . . ."

"There's a two-way traffic, Miss Abigail, I'm thinking," Geordie said. "Only this verra afternoon, there was

two well-grown lambs from Altnadean I had to put back through."

"Two innocent lambs, indeed! Two against twenty!"

"Twa black yins," said Geordie, broad.

It seemed that Geordie was a match for Miss Abigail, and it was time to be getting back, so they said goodbye and Sandy watched Geordie MacTaggart walk away, so big and watchful and light of foot, and Sandy thought he would always remember the day he first met Geordie, whose dad had been in the regiment, too.

"I do love George," Miss Abigail was saying. "A perfectly wonderful young man. I wish I could steal him

THOUGHT—2

Intellect destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose.

Oscar Wilde

from that old nincompoop, Drumfechan."

"Auntie Ab's fair dotty about boys," whispered Sheila, dropping back. "Big boys, wee boys, Geordies, Sandys.

"A bee in the bonnet of my auntie's
Is she loves anything in panties."

Sheila could be funny. They laughed till they were sore about the ribs, and Miss Abigail, striding down the hill, turned round and said: "Infant humour, always so mysterious. Well, it does me good." She did not ask what the joke had been, but smiled upon them and walked again.

Sheila followed Miss Abigail, and Sandy followed Sheila, and Susan moved up and down the line. Sandy was thinking what a grand day this had been, not over yet, for the pipes and drums were to play Retreat. And he was thinking about the past three weeks, when he had worked so hard and never been in trouble, or not so anyone would notice: this was the best day of the best time ever, all since he broke the greenhouse glass.

The Secret Place came into view beyond the twisting ribbon of the hill road to Drumfechan. There was no sound now. The smoke or steam still blew square from the chimney top across the sky. The blind blank buildings still crouched below. The fence still gleamed. Somebody said it was electric, death in that electric fence.

"The monster lurks," Miss Abigail said. "Monster, I hate you and you hate me. I refuse to be hypnotized. I will not look."

And she walked on, her head half-turned to Altnadean. It was funny that Miss Abigail with all her book learning and her cleverness would feel the same as Sandy and Sheila did about the Secret Place.

Miss Abigail's Daimler waited at the road. It was black, like the colonel's old, old thunder-rumble Bentley, not quite so old.

Private Smodger snored peacefully in the purple heather. It was not true about Miss Abigail loving anything in panties. She did not love her chauffeur for this afternoon. "Pray waken the Sleeping Beauty," said Miss Abigail and seated herself like the Queen of England, only much less friendly, in the back seat of her Daimler landaulette. The top was open. Susan climbed in beside her.

"Smodger! Wake up, Smodger. Good old Smodger, stir your bones."

Good old Smodger stirred bones, rubbed eyes, groaned, sat up, shook head. There were a couple of empties of Miss Abigail's McEwan's Strong hidden near Smodger in the heather.

Smodger must have felt awful, because he did not even grumble. Good Jocks don't grumble when they feel most awful. Smodger started the Daimler and drove off at fifteen miles an hour, which was Miss Abigail's pet speed.

Sandy took down the rod. He and Sheila had had to push their bikes most of the way up here. But it was worth all that, freewheeling home with the eighteen trout—seventeen tiddlers and Sheila's good one—to the colonel's supper, and this had been the grandest day in Sandy's life and the day was not nearly over yet. . . .

The room was hot and the windows were shut on account of the neighbours, and Dad still tuned his pipes. It was a long, slow, wailing, droning job—fill the bag and pat the bag and start again and stop. As far as Dad was concerned, Mum and Sandy were not here. Only his pipes were here. Well, he must be satisfied at last. How loud a relief the silence was.

But the pipe major was not satisfied. He frowned. His face went a darker cherry red and his cheeks and his throat bulged out. An ignorant person might think there was danger of Dad exploding, but no such thing. The drones were in perfect tune. He played a few sad notes and they were perfect. He took a few steps with his piper's toes turned out, and he stopped with his left knee bent and his left foot in sympathy with the beat. He let the air out of his lungs, and the sound died off, and he put his right hand up to gather his pipes with that hollow clunk, and he laid down his pipes like brittle egg shells.

"Something terrible," Dad muttered. "I'll be going, then." He came over to Mum and gave her a kiss, but his heart was not in it. "You all right, Mary?"

"I'm fine. Wait now," she said. She took her handkerchief to wipe the sweat from the poor man's brow. Then she laid her hand on Dad's hot cheek and said: "Play well, Donald."

Dad gave a grunt. He put on his feather bonnet. He picked up his precious pipes. Sandy opened the door. The pipe major marched off in all his splendour to play Retreat.

Mum and Sandy always had a smile about it. "Dad's in a rare old stew the nicht," said Sandy.

"Ay," she said. And she said: "That's the mark of the real piper, Sandy. He'll play his best. Then he'll sup a wee dram and feel fine after."

MUM had the pink things all knitted for the bairn. There was a book from the library on her lap. She would read a while and potter a while in Auntie Ethel's garden and walk a while and be busy a while about the house. But a lot of the time she would sit content, thinking of the baby.

Sandy thought. "Ten days, is it, Mum?" he asked.

"Ay," she said, and she smiled to herself until another thought went across her face. "The sooner the better now."

"What's the hurry?" Sandy asked. Soon or late he wasn't sure which was best, because having babies was a bit difficult, he knew; and another thing he did not know was what it would be like with a baby yelling its head off in the house.

"No hurry, Sandy. It's just that if Dad had to go away before the bairn arrived, then Dad might be worrying."

If Dad had to go away, then who would be worrying about who?

Sandy was dressed up in his Sunday-go-to-meetings for Retreat. He was going with good old Smodger, because Sheila would be with the colonel with the officers. He looked at his watch. He had ten minutes yet.

"I'll need to be going, Mum."

Mum went into the kitchen and came back with a parcel. "It's a cake I made for the Miss Thomsons down at Daftmill. You could take it after, Sandy." The Miss Thomsons were Mum's second cousins twice removed. Daftmill was a distance along the glen.

He took the cake box in brown paper. It was warm. The fresh-baked chocolate smell came through. "I could take it if I didna' eat it," Sandy said.

His mother inspected him all round. "You'll do," she said.

She watched him put the parcel in the carrier and get on his bike and settle his kilt and ride off to Retreat. She saw the son in the father, and the father in the son. "I'm a woman blessed," Sandy's mother said aloud and went back to her reading. . . .

The old Hydropathic stood against the hill. It was not so old, not even a hundred years, built for folk to take the waters, inside and out, of Altnadean. Now it was headquarters, H.Q. Company, canteen, sergeants' mess and the like of that in the main building; A and B Companies in huts at the east end; the officers' mess in a smaller stone building to the west. So the main building and the two end sets of buildings made three sides, and the fourth side was the open valley.

Sandy McBain and Private Smodger

Smith sat at the top of the bank and they faced the valley and they were close above the pipes and drums, playing Retreat on a green grass lawn.

There were people round them—Jocks alone, and Jocks with lassies from Altnadean and nearabout, and highland people from up and down the glen, all come to the playing of Retreat. There might be a special thing that drew them here tonight, the people of the Black Watch country, whose sons had gone to wars and might soon go again. There was a comfort and a challenge in the pipes.

Down to the right were the officers. The colonel was in plain clothes; on his one side sat Miss Abigail; on his other sat small Sheila. It was like a party in a way, but a special soldiers' kind of party, with his majesty the R.S.M., kilt and sword and all, standing alone on the cinder path, a stern eye on his flock.

Sandy sat with knees together, chin on knees, one hand on one wrist below his knees. He watched them march to west and counter-march, and play this way again, pipe major in the front rank, right, pipe major in the front rank, left; dirk belt, cross belt, sash and plaid; the golden chevrons on the arm. But Sandy did not see his dad alone. He saw him as a part, a member of the pipes and drums, all together and all alone, the drumbeat and the melody.

And there was big Drummer Strachan in the tiger skin. And there, always there in front, marched the drum major with his silver stick, twirling it in his one white gauntlet, twirling it in the other, back to the right hand, slant across the body, left, right, left, right, up and down. And now, yes now, the drum major's famous throw, up, high up, higher even than Geordie's stone, high the broad silver knob, and spinning end for end, point over knob, and the silvery knob was rising again, and the whole stick fell to meet him, marching on. The suspense was over; the famous throw was done. Some day, some terrible day, he might. . . . But no: not Drum Major Elder.

Form circle now, the lilting "Strathspey," the merry reel. The pipe major took one pace forward, swung for his signal, took one pace back. They marched and counter-marched.

Drummer Strachan beat a double boom. The pipe band halted. Silence in the soft wind blowing. Stillness in the living frame. The music stayed on for that second, and it died; and then an after-thought of music came back from the hills across the glen. The pipe band stood at ease.

Sandy and Smodger sat on the bank. "They're grand the night," said Smodger Smith. "Never heard better in all my service." There was more than met the eye in good old Private Smodger Smith—best stories about blood and guts, best old joker. . . .

"If it isn't wee sweetie Flapperlugs."

Sandy did not move. It was the best day that Sandy could remember, but now Sandy's demon growled inside.

"Which yin?" said another voice behind.

"The wee lassie in the tartan skirt."

Sandy looked round at Davie Muir's fat face with the leery smirk. His face was dirty too, smudged brown at the corners of his mouth. Sandy looked and did not speak. It was a stranger with Davie Muir.

"Beat it, Haggis-face," growled good old Smodger.

They went away and then the interval was over. Drummer Strachan put up his drum. The pipe major and his pipers took deep breaths. Sandy watched his father's waxed moustaches dip, red face, grand swelling of cheeks and neck. The drum major flicked his silver stick. They marched to the officers again. The noise of the wind was lost again.

Another sound was lost. It would be a rumble, whistle, distant roar, a moan, if you could hear the sound from the four white trails in the deep, deep sky, climbing overhead, invisible bomber, here I come. There was another, speedier plume, curving to cross the four white trails, curving back and across again, fighter and bomber in the sky. Boom-boom, a big drummer beat his double boom. That shock wave only came, and for one tight moment drowned the music here. The heads went up. *Whose?* was the thought. But the fighter and bomber were playing games.

It was the slow time now, "The Mist-covered Mountains." Sandy sat with his chin on his knees, hands clasped about his knees. This was a sad tune that he loved, a tune that the shepherd on the hill might hear. He would hear the rumour of that tune from down in the valley of Altnadean and he would stand, his sheep, his collie dog, the music of his hills. He would listen and walk again.

And the people at the Secret Place—would "The Mist-covered Mountains" reach over to them? But the Secret Place was far from here; and yet the shadow of the Secret Place lay always here.

Now the slow march was over, and now the drum major marched to the officers. He halted. The colonel stood. The drum major threw his silver stick from right to left, and paused, white gauntlet at his side. He saluted, forearm straight, glove to the dice of the feather bonnet. The colonel bared his head.

"Permission to march off the pipes and drums, sir?"

"March off, please, Drum Major," the colonel said.

The drum major saluted a second time, changed stick. He turned about with flying kilt, glimpse of Drum Major's muckle thighs.

Sandy loved the slow, sad tune. He loved a different tune in a different way. This tune was not sad. This was the wild mad tune, the tune of the soldier in the fight, wildest, maddest, wild mad tune. The pipes and drums marched off to "Highland Laddie."

Retreat was over. The grand day was not over yet.

Sandy and Smodger stood again. They walked towards the old Hydropathic. It was of reddish stone, with towers and turrets, battlements and domes, with arrow slits, even a chute for boiling oil. It was a new-old imitation, with curls and twists and lovely frills, such as cherubs with wicked faces. He and Smodger walked to Sandy's bike, which was leaning against a chestnut tree. In the carrier basket was a brown paper parcel, opened, a cardboard box, the broken remains of a chocolate cake.

Sandy looked at it. He just looked at it. He felt cold. His tummy heaved inside him. The piece of cake grew blurred. For the second time that day his knees were jellies.

"Wot's the matter, chum?" asked good old Smodger anxiously. "You look like death warmed up."

"My mum's fresh chocolate sandwhich cake, my mum's fresh. . . ." Sandy said it over and over.

Smodger took him by the arm. He gave him a terrier's shake, quite hard. "Come on now, Skipper."

The blood thrummed back into Sandy's head. He rubbed a finger across each eye. His knees were all right again. He told Smodger about the cake being for the Miss Thomsons along at Daftmill; and he knew it was Davie Muir, because nobody else would do the like of that, and because he remembered brown smudges at the corners of that mouth. *The wee lassie in the tartan shirt.*

"The blank something little dash blank something," Smodger growled, bad swearwords.

Sandy hardly heard them. He was looking for Davie Muir. He saw him and the other boy. They were standing at the right corner of the old Hydropathic, and they were watching back this way and they were laughing. Then they turned and went round the corner to the carrier park.

"I'll . . . I'll . . . !" For once good old Smodger was out of words. He marched, arms straight, above the waistbelt front and back, kilt swinging. Good old Smodger's blood was up.

"Smodger!" Sandy ran after him. "Smodger!" Smodger stopped.

"Don't say a word to Davie Muir. You leave Davie Muir to me."

Smodger looked down at him. Then Smodger's mouth fell open. "Cor!" he muttered. "I pity 'im! Okay then, Skipper, if them's me orders."

The carriers were drawn up in a hollow square, for the public to have a look at when Retreat was over. They were the latest kind, not with tracks like the old carriers like baby tanks. These ones had huge round rubber sausages for wheels, to ride, to swim, to go anywhere—to go at fifty across country, people said. They bristled with rockets, mortars and machine guns. The carrier crews were here to explain.

Sandy had been going to have a real good look at the carriers with Smodger Smith and, of course, Smodger, being the only colonel's batman in the whole battalion, rather a special kind of big shot, he could get you anywhere, even to look at the secret bits inside.

But now Sandy did not see the carriers. He saw Davie Muir and that other boy. Davie Muir was twelve years of age, half a head taller, broader than Sandy. Sandy pushed his way through folk to Davie Muir.

"You!" he said. "You!" his voice squeaked until Davie Muir and the other boy turned from the carrier to look down at him. "Did you eat my mither's cake?"

"Hear that, Jim?" said Davie Muir. "The wee lassie says did we eat her mither's cake."

Sandy's throat was tight in him. Things danced and shivered round about, and in him too, and all he saw was that fat sneery face.

"Ken who the wee frog-lassie is? She's daughter to yon bull-frog in the fancy suit, the one with his throat puffed out, puffin' and croakin' fit to bust." Davie Muir spoke clear enough and loud enough, sideways to Jim, whoever Jim might be. Davie Muir was showing off to Jim, who did not look too happy, hearing that last thing Davie Muir had said.

That last thing did a thing to Sandy. His head came clear. The heat fell down away from him. All the other things that Davie Muir had said and done—told on him about the clock behind the pulpit, knocked down his bike, let the air out of his tyres. *Sweetie flapperlugs, wee lassie with the tartan skirt,* ate the chocolate sandwich cake—these and others ran through his mind and ran away. What stayed was that about Pipe Major Donald McBain, his father. Sandy's temper took him hot. But now he was not hot. Now he was icy strong, and he knew what he was going to do and that was kill Davie Muir.

He made a start with his left fist to the face; then Muir clinched with him and they wrestled among the folk until Smodger broke it up.

"Stand back! Make room there, please."

The people stood back in the square of the carriers drawn up for inspection, and that made a smaller square with Muir, McBain and Jim and Smodger in it. "I heard wot you said," hissed Smodger Smith to Davie Muir. "You got it coming to you, cock. Wanter fight 'im?"

"Fight that wee . . . ?" began Davie Muir, and swallowed, and took off the jacket of his flannel suit.

"You, Skipper?"

Sandy did not answer. He took off his jacket too, but he never took his eyes off Davie Muir.

"Now, boys," said Smodger, in full command. "I want a good, clean fight—no holding, no punching below the belt, no kidney punches. Any dirty tricks, I'm on to you like a knife. Get to yer corners, then. No, shake hands first."

Sandy moved his eyes from Muir to Smith. "I'll not," he said.

Jim went with Davie Muir. Smodger came with Sandy. Smodger was second and referee and everything.

"Now listen, chum," said good old Smodger in Sandy's ear. "He's got the reach of you, so get inside and stay inside and hang on if you have to. One other thing—you know where that cake is lyin', eh? So sock 'im in the soggy belly." Smodger raised his voice. "First and last and only round. Seconds out of the ring. Time!"

Sandy had had a few lessons from his dad. He knew straight left and keep your guard up. So did Muir. Sandy's very first rush, he got one in the eye, and his right eye was on fire

WHY?

In February, Jim Smith took his dressing-gown to the local cleaners. It came back with a number of small holes all down the front and Smith refused to accept it. He sued the cleaners for the damage.

The cleaners did not try to avoid liability by relying on any "conditions" on their tickets. But they maintained that they were not responsible, because what had probably happened was that the cleaning processes had revealed latent damage to the cloth, which had been caused some time previously by moths or by splashes of toothpaste.

"This is not a good defence," said Smith's counsel. "The cleaners must prove to the court's satisfaction that they were not responsible for this damage. We contend that it is not enough for them merely to put forward some probable explanation as to the garment having already been damaged before they received it."

But the cleaners won.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 33*

CRUNCHIE
makes exciting biting!

4D

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Every time you eat a juicy, sun-sweet Outspan orange you're enjoying a natural tonic. For fresh oranges are rich in vitamin C, natural fruit sugar and vital minerals that you need for health.
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and he put his head down, Muir's knuckles hammering on his head, and he went close in, punching for the chocolate cake, punching the pain in his eye away, and he heard a gasp from above his head, and Muir was holding on.

"Break," said Smodger. He pushed them apart. "Muir, you're holding. McBain, watch those belly punches. Fight on."

They fought on and on. The pain was less in Sandy's eye, but the eye was half closed up, and blood on his cheek, he felt it trickle, warm, and there was a singing in his ears, and Sandy panted.

Muir's face was not even marked. He had stopped smiling that sneery smirk. He panted, too. Sandy's blood was on Muir's left hand.

Sandy went in close again. A fist exploded in his ear. He punched, but his punches were no good, arms too heavy to hold his hands. He heard a man's voice calling: "Keep at him, Sandy!" He knew that voice. It was another Davie, a decent one, Lance Corporal Davie Judge, D Company, a pal of his.

Muir pushed him off, and held him off with his longer reach; and then a worse thing happened, the sorest thing that ever could happen—Sandy sprung back his left thumb on Muir's right fist, and that was his left hand useless. He grunted with the pain, and then he fought right hand forward, fighting on.

Muir had stopped punching straight. His guard was open. Sandy led in there with his right, and he got him, yes he got him in the solar plexus, and all the voices were shouting now. "Guid laddie, Sandy! Bash him, Sandy!"

Muir was gasping, doubled up, but he did not go down. He was covered with his arms, and no way through, and his breath coming back to him, and then he straightened and swung again, and Sandy saw it coming with his one good eye too late, and then the world went red and black and round and round, and Sandy was sitting and shaking his head and rubbing his chin, and his mouth was bleeding, too.

"You've got ten seconds," Smodger hissed. "Stay there till eight." Then Smodger began to count. They seemed long seconds up to eight, but Sandy was clear in his head again, and he stood, and he heard Sheila's voice behind him somewhere. "Beat him, Sandy! Go on, beat him!" Fierce, she sounded, not like Sheila. But it was Sheila.

A GREAT bellow stopped the fight. Sandy was almost too tired to know anything except that fighting was all there was or ever could be. But he knew this was the R.S.M. The Jocks all froze. The people were still.

"You again!" said the R.S.M. The R.S.M. was not too keen on Sandy on account of the tripwire Sandy did not mean for him in Lady's Wynd. The R.S.M. was opening his mouth to send everybody packing at the double-double when good old Smodger went up to him, stood to attention, whispered.

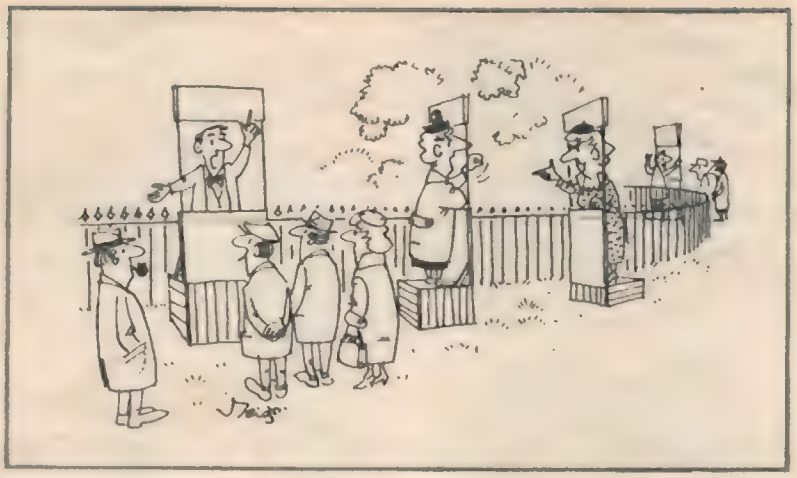
"Said that, did he?" The R.S.M. gave Davie Muir a look, and then he looked at Sandy. "Box on!" he barked. New referee.

Sandy's breath was easier. His eye was closed up tight, loose tooth, sore mouth, left hand on fire and knuckles aching. He did not feel too good. His blood was all over Davie Muir, who was unhappy, gasping for breath with the cake inside him.

Sandy went in again. He led for the body as Smodger said; and then he did a different thing, a thing he had not tried in all this fight: he came over and up, and his right fist crunched on Davie's nose. It was a beauty. So was Muir's windmill swing at the self-same second to Sandy's chin.

The next thing Sandy knew was being on the ground. Davie Muir sat in front of him, head in hands, nose bleeding, tears running down between his fingers.

Sandy got on one knee. He was all heat and dizziness and pain. *I have to*, he told himself. *I will*. And then



he got on the other knee, and then he pushed with his good hand, then he rolled and weaved about, but he was standing. Davie Muir stayed where he was.

"Had enough?" said the R.S.M. to Davie Muir. Davie Muir just shook his head.

"Shake hands then," said the R.S.M.

"I'll not," said Sandy. There was a gasp from Jocks and people at Sandy saying no to the R.S.M., but Sandy wasn't caring. "Not unless he says he's sorry."

Davie Muir took his hands away. His nose was in a mess. "Sorry about the cake," he mumbled.

"It's no the cake. It's what you said."

"Sorry," said Davie Muir.

So they shook hands, and Sandy felt that strange and sudden thing of liking the enemy you hated, terrible insult all forgiven, not forgotten. And there were cheers and shouts for Sandy McBain, but none for Davie Muir, who fought well enough, but fell from his high horse with a bump. Davie went away, holding handkerchief to nose.

Then the R.S.M. sent all Jocks not on duty packing at the double-double, and then the R.S.M. glared down at Sandy, and Sandy was pretty well frightened of the R.S.M., so he stared up with his one good eye and the other tight shut now. There might or might not have been a grim wee smile for a second underneath the R.S.M.'s moustache. "Smith!" barked the R.S.M. "Take this boy to the M.I. Room."

"Verragood, sir," good old Smodger said.

They walked towards the bike. "What did Davie Muir say, Sandy?" Sheila asked.

Sandy did not speak. Smodger frowned at Sheila. Good old Smodger understood.

Here was the bike and the quarter piece of chocolate sandwich cake, and Sandy was all aches and pains from head to foot, but the cake for the Miss Thomsons along at Daftmill. . . .

"Mum made it herself," he said.

Smodger and Sheila talked about it. Sandy couldn't seem to think.

"I know," she said. "Mrs. Morton made a cake today." Mrs. Morton was cook at Altnadean Big House. "And it's a chocolate sandwich, too; so you could take that one to the Thomsons, and your mummy wouldn't even know."

"The skipper can't take no cakes nowhere," Smodger said. "The skipper's had it for tonight."

"And I'm not allowed out late." Sheila frowned. "Well, you could, Smodger, in the Bentley, and say it was from Sandy's mum, or even explain. The Miss Thomsons are pretty decent."

"Ay," said Sandy. "They're pretty decent." It was a good idea, wasn't it? He was too tired and sore. *I could take it if I didna' eat it*, he remembered saying as a joke to Mum. Well, then, she would think it was him who ate it. "She'll ask, though," Sandy said. "Then what am I to say?"

"It's a case for a white lie," Smodger said. "Your mum was keen about the cake; the baby's comin' any day; your mum won't be too happy as it is, seeing that face of yours, without adding cakes to injuries. See what I mean, chum?"

"Okay, then," Sandy said. He couldn't quite see what anything meant.

"Come on, and we'll get you washed up a bit."

Sheila waited outside the M.I. Room. The orderly washed off the blood, and cleaned the cuts and put on iodine. It stung more like hell than anything. And then he strapped up Sandy's thumb. "That's that, Rocky Marciano."

Who should be standing there with Sheila but the colonel and Miss Abigail. "Poor child!" cried Miss Abigail, and turned away. Miss Abigail just couldn't bear it about hurt animals and things.

The colonel had met the R.S.M. "Hail, Kinyucher," said the colonel, as he always said. He laid his big hand on Sandy's shoulder, and took it away, and that was all the colonel did to be different from any other time. "We'll take your bike in the car and drop you off," he said.

The wind was soft, better than cool water on his face. The car stopped beyond the door. "You put your bike away," the colonel said. "I'll pop in a moment." The colonel knocked. Sandy wheeled his bike to Auntie Ethel's woodshed, toolshed, combination; and then he noticed with his one tired eye that the cake and parcel were still in the carrier of his bike, so he hid them in among the flower pots underneath the shelf, and he went into the house.

Mum was a bit upset about that eye, but she seemed right proud of Sandy, after what the colonel might have said. "So you beat him," she said, helping Sandy to get into his pyjamas.

"Ay," he said. "I beat him."

"Just what Davie Muir's been needing." She gave Sandy a kiss on one of the less bruised places. "Lie quiet now," she said.

Mum came back some time or other. "Raw beef," she said, "to take the swelling from the eye." The beef was soft and wet and cold. "Shut your other eye," she said. "What did that Davie say or do?" she asked above him.

Sandy had been told to tell a lie about what Davie Muir had done; and Sandy couldn't, he just couldn't tell what Davie Muir had said about his dad. "Och, Mum," said Sandy. "I canna' say. It was good reasons, though."

"You and your secrets," said his mum. But then she said: "The cake, you couldn't have taken it to Daftmill?"

"Ay," he said. "I took it." First lie. To save upsetting Mum? To save himself? Which or what or anything? There was a shiver in Sandy's spine. "After Retreat and afore the fight," he said, on his back, with his good eye and his bad eye shut. Second lie.

"And what did the Miss Thomsons say?"

"They said: *Thanks for the grand chocolate sandwich cake.*"—Lies were like those chain things people sent for you to send to other people, one and two and four and eight, and up to a million with no escape.

"My wee warrior," said Mum. She gave him an aspirin. He said his prayers, ". . . and make me a good, tough kind boy, Amen." She went away.

He was too tired with too many aches to sleep. He heard the colonel's Bentley go pobble-pobble on the village street below his window. Smodger, that would be, taking the chocolate sandwich cake to Daftmill. And there were voices in his head, or in the house. . . .

"Sandy!" It was Dad, still in the kilt with his gold-topped sporran, a khaki shirt. He had taken the ornaments and doublet off. But in Dad's hand was a cardboard box, and in the box was a piece of chocolate sandwich cake.

"Auntie Ethel went for a flower pot, and she found this in amongst, and fresh, and she brought it in to ask about it. Didn't you tell your Mum you took the cake to Daftmill? What's the meaning of it, Sandy?"

DAD's voice was quiet. Sandy looked at Dad. He could smell Dad's dram of whisky in his breath. White lies, grey lies, nigger black—all lies were lies to Dad and Mum.

Sandy cried. He burst out greeting like a bairn. The grand day was in ruins.

So then the pipe major sat on Sandy's bed, and in a while Sandy was able to explain about the cake, and Dad seemed to understand a bit, although he said: "You shouldn't have fought him just for that, not with your mother so near her time, and what you promised me. It's the self-control you're lacking, Sandy."

"It wasn't the cake, Dad," Sandy said. The light of day had nearly gone, and he could not see his father's face against the window, and he shut his tired good eye again.

"What was it, then?"

But how could Sandy or anybody say to Pipe Major Donald McBain that Davie Muir had called him *the Bullfrog in the . . .* ? A shudder of after-crying caught Sandy by the throat; he was ashamed for crying.

"Well," said Dad. "You'll mebbe can tell it in your own good time. Now go to sleep. You're to spend the Sabbath Day in bed. Night-night, then."

"Night-night, Dad," he said. He lay with his aches and pains from top to toe, and they got less, and Sandy slept, but wild dreams raced about him. . . .

By next evening he was feeling not too bad, popping up to the mirror every now and then to inspect his eye which had opened enough to see a bit, but it was becoming a blacker beauty of a black eye hour by hour.

On Monday morning he went back to work. There was still a week to do to pay off about the glass. He could not hold a rake, because of his left thumb, which was much the sorest thing; but he could do one-handed jobs, and did, and twice as hard, until his good hand ached with cramps to balance up the other.

It was in Monday's papers that the news was worse. Up till then it had been a thing that grown-up people read about, and listened on the wireless to, and you could see them thinking of; but they did not like to speak about it much. Now they spoke about it all the time. Oil seemed to be the trouble at a place two thousand miles away.

Tuesday was the day the rumours started flying. . . . *Did you hear tell about the two foreigners they caught up near the Installation?* Rumours of aeroplanes and spies and submarines.

Then one rumour that was true: *The Battalion is to move tonight.* . . .

To be continued next week

WHY?

See page 31

BECAUSE the judge held that if a cloth garment comes back damaged from the cleaners, they do not have to prove that they did not cause the damage. If they offer a reasonable alternative explanation, which the plaintiff cannot contradict, he has failed to prove negligence.

(This ruling is based on actual cases)

For a really big smile

say c-h-e-e-s-e

and Hovis

A rich English cheese and brown bread and butter—who could ask for more? *You could*—and if you're wise *you will!* To the fine character of the cheese you'll add the nutty flavour of Hovis, the wheatgerm bread, and turn the snack into food for the gods.

So don't just say brown, say Hovis.

Cheshire cheese can be white like this, or red, or blue, and it always tastes even better with Hovis.

Hovis

is the slice of life

have some every day

Remoh gets his man

Continued from page 13

trained dogs and two puppies in training at its Chelmsford headquarters. Cousins and Sergeant Dan Hare, the section leader, work a twenty-four hour standby duty and may be called out for operations in any part of the county.

The section was formed experimentally in 1953, but it was not until two years later that the dogs were considered fully trained for police work. In May, 1955, Cousins was called out for the first time.

The call was to a house near Colchester where a twelve-year-old girl had woken in her bedroom to find a man standing over her with a knife. When she screamed the intruder jumped out of the window. Cousins and Remoh arrived at daybreak. From where the man had landed below the window, the dog tracked through a meadow and into an army camp.

"He made a circuit of the parade ground," says Cousins, "entered a block of barrack rooms and walked through the door of one occupied by about a dozen soldiers. He stopped at one of the beds in which a man was sleeping and refused to leave it."

The occupant was taken into custody. Later the girl picked him out at an identification parade, and his fingerprints were found on a table at her bedside. He was convicted of housebreaking and sent to Borstal.

The use of police dogs, which has been increasing steadily in Britain during the last ten years, has two distinct applications. In towns and built-up areas patrol dogs accompany policemen on the beat, principally for their psychological value in crime prevention. Tracker dogs are used by police forces in country districts where the dogs have a better chance of following a criminal's escape route.

The track which the dog follows varies according to the terrain; over a field it would be compounded of the scent of the crushed grass and shoe leather, mingling with that of the quarry's feet permeating through the leather. Any body scent left in the air disperses too quickly to be picked up by the dogs.

Tracking a scent laid across hard ground is difficult, and in urban areas crossed tracks make a dog's task virtually impossible.

Tracker dogs and their handlers are called out in all climatic conditions and frequently have to work at night. When, in 1956, four soldiers escaped from the Military Correction Establishment at Colchester, the army asked for the Essex dog section's help. Remoh began tracking in the early hours of the morning. "We tracked for two miles in almost complete darkness over rough ground covered in ice and snow," says Cousins.

Part of the route lay across marshy land into which Cousins frequently sank to the knees. Eventually Remoh lost the track at a point where the escapees had crossed a main road.

That evening a builder's lorry and a car collided half a mile from the spot where the track had ended. The lorry proved to have been stolen by the wanted men, who abandoned it after the crash. Cousins arrived at the scene an hour later and his dog tracked for half a mile across open fields to a haystack, where Cousins found three of the men asleep.

At the scene of an investigation the dog handler must decide on the most suitable method of operation. Once at Harold Hill housing estate, near Romford, six men jumped out of a stolen vehicle which had been stopped by a police car and ran in all directions. Cousins decided that normal tracking in so densely populated an area was impracticable, and Remoh was set free to search under Cousins's control. Half a mile away, the dog led the police officers who were following him to a garden fence where one of the men was found hiding. His information led to the arrest of his companions.

Dogs which will stand the strain of police work and absorb the necessary training are not easy to find. In Britain, most of them come from a few proved strains. Alsatians and Dobermanns are used almost exclusively; Labradors are employed for guard duties. Bloodhounds have been almost entirely superseded.

Training for tracker dogs takes two years and continues after they have become operational, each dog being trained and operated exclusively by one handler throughout its service. The dogs are not taught to be savage. "We can't afford to use a dog which will bite, unless it does so only as a last resort," says Sergeant Hare.

The animals are trained to bark when they reach their quarry and will never attack a man who stands still. "Provided a suspect doesn't move," says Cousins, "Remoh will approach him, sniff him, then wag his stump of a tail and look pleased. He has no mean streak."

Remoh—who has been commended by a magistrates bench—and his companions are kept in kennels at police headquarters, but their weekly rest day is spent at the homes of the handlers. Cousins often takes his dog home for the evening after a hard spell of duty. In January, 1954, when Remoh had a severe chill, Cousins kept him at home for a fortnight. "On three occasions," he says, "I had to sit up with him all night."

Remoh is fond of raw eggs, milk and fruit as a change from his official diet of raw meat and dog biscuits, and has a particular partiality for buttercups.

He has solved at least one crime on his own. In the early hours of a morning in June, 1955, a man stumbled into Brentwood Police Station with a deep gash in his forehead. He said that he had been beaten up by Teddy boys, and was taken to hospital.

At 7.30 that same morning the Brentwood police had another visitor, an elderly office cleaner, who reported that the National Insurance offices, where he worked, had been entered during the night. The back door leading to the offices had been smashed open. At the bottom of a flight of stairs a constable found a pool of blood.

"I was called out at eight-thirty," says Cousins. "Despite the fact that hundreds of people were already on the streets, Remoh followed a track out of the building and along the pavements. He sniffed around a public seat and went on from there until, surprisingly, we arrived at Brentwood Police Station."

It did not take the Brentwood police long to connect the circumstances and put them to the man in hospital, who admitted that he had broken into the offices and fallen down the stairs. Later he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. THE END

A Sunday by the Sea

by DOUGLAS GIBSON

The sleepy boats rock on the evening tide,
And we, reluctant, now the day is done,
Turn from the shore towards the homeward ride,
Drugged with sea dreams and drowsy with the sun.
Along the pier the lights burst into flower,
Sprinkling their golden pollen on the sea;
Of all the day the most enchanted hour
With violet mists that veil in mystery
The swagger liners on the sea's blue rim,
Evoking in our hearts the magic names
Of distant lands, to dream of in the dim
Dark city with its Monday morning claims.

"We've forgotten the children"

Packing the punch in apples

Continued from page 19

says. "Day after day I drove for miles, calling at forty or fifty pubs and off-licences before making a single sale."

The tide turned for them in a sleepy little hamlet in mid-Sussex where Howie persuaded a landlord to set a barrel on the bar. As Howie was leaving, a wizened old man came in. "Just a minute," said the landlord. "We'll soon know if your stuff is any good. Old Bert here is our biggest cider drinker."

Bert condescended to sample a half-pint, and Howie waited as the ancient adam's apple went up and down. At last Bert set down the glass and shook his head. "Too 'ard," he said, "and not enough go in it."

Downcast, Howie went. But two days later, a pencilled postcard arrived from the landlord. "Six barrels—urgent." Howie delivered them—and learned that old Bert had found the go in Merrydown after all. After two further pints, he had been carried home for the first time in fifty-one years.

Old Bert is held in high regard by the vintners of Merrydown, for from that time the fame and potency of their cider seemed to flash round the county.

Ward began to keep a press cuttings book, which soon contained some of the finest magisterial rebukes in the country.

Production increased so fast that Ward's wife protested that she was being washed out of the house. Howie found a gutted and mouldering manor house at Horam, reputed to harbour the ghosts of a white cat and a white owl in its underground passages and cellars, and Merrydown moved in.

Today, Horam Manor, with its landscape of huge wooden and steel vats, resembles some junior Abadan. The total storage capacity is 600,000 gallons. In 1955, a boom year, 400,000 gallons of Merrydown were produced—and the Exchequer began to take an interest.

Until this time there had been no duty on cider. "Any of the big firms could have gone in for high-proof cider," Howie says, "but most of them were cautious about attracting the Chancellor's attention. We became very unpopular with other manufacturers."

In the next Budget, in 1956, the blow fell. A duty of 10s. 6d. per gallon was imposed on cider of more than fifteen degrees proof spirit. This put up the price of Merrydown from 4s. 6d. a bottle to 6s. 3d.—and the pub pint from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. Sales slumped.

"It gave us a nasty moment," Howie says. "We had competitors by this time, and most of them decided to lower the alcohol content to escape the duty. So we decided to increase ours—and we did so by twenty-five per cent. And we exported to Ceylon, New Zealand, Rhodesia, the United States and Canada."

Howie and Ward also began experiments with other fruits and vegetables. Carrots, beetroot, rhubarb, currants and other berries have all been converted into alcoholic drinks in the Horam laboratory. But Howie doubts if they have a commercial future.

"Some have reasonable, if unusual, flavour and plenty of kick, but a man would feel a fool asking for a glass of carrot. And the price would be prohibitive in many cases. Strawberry wine, for instance, would retail at about twelve-and-sixpence a bottle." White-currant wine is an exception. Every drop of last year's small production was sold.

Vintage cider is made from seventy per cent cooking apples—mainly Bramleys—and thirty per cent dessert varieties. Cider apples, with their astringent flavour and high tannin content, are not used at all. Each bottle comes from two and half pounds of apples and a quarter of a pound of sugar..

Pressing begins in September and goes on for between three and five months. After white granulated sugar has been added, the mixture is piped to the outside storage vats where it ferments stormily for six weeks and matures for about a year.

Merrydown's sixty workers are well accustomed to their heady product and are allowed to drink as much of it as they want—within reason. On one occasion at least the practice has proved an embarrassment.

Howie, showing a distinguished party round the works, was leading them into the bottling room when Ernest Ward, the foreman, plucked his sleeve and whispered that a new girl bottler had drunk too much. "She's singing a bit in there," he said.

"Well, put her in a room we've already visited," Howie said, and smoothly diverted the party.

Unfortunately, the visitors continually asked to return to rooms they had already visited. Apprehensively, Howie led the way.

"I had no idea how the foreman was coping with these sudden reappearances and didn't learn till afterwards that the girl had been shuttled quite happily all round the works for two hours. In the end she fell asleep and two other girls carried her out to the shrubbery. When it came on to rain they had to get her back, and after a frantic conference decided to lay her on the sofa in my room and lock the door. Luckily, we never went back there." THE END

THOUGHT—3

Second thoughts often are the very worst of all thoughts.

William Shenstone

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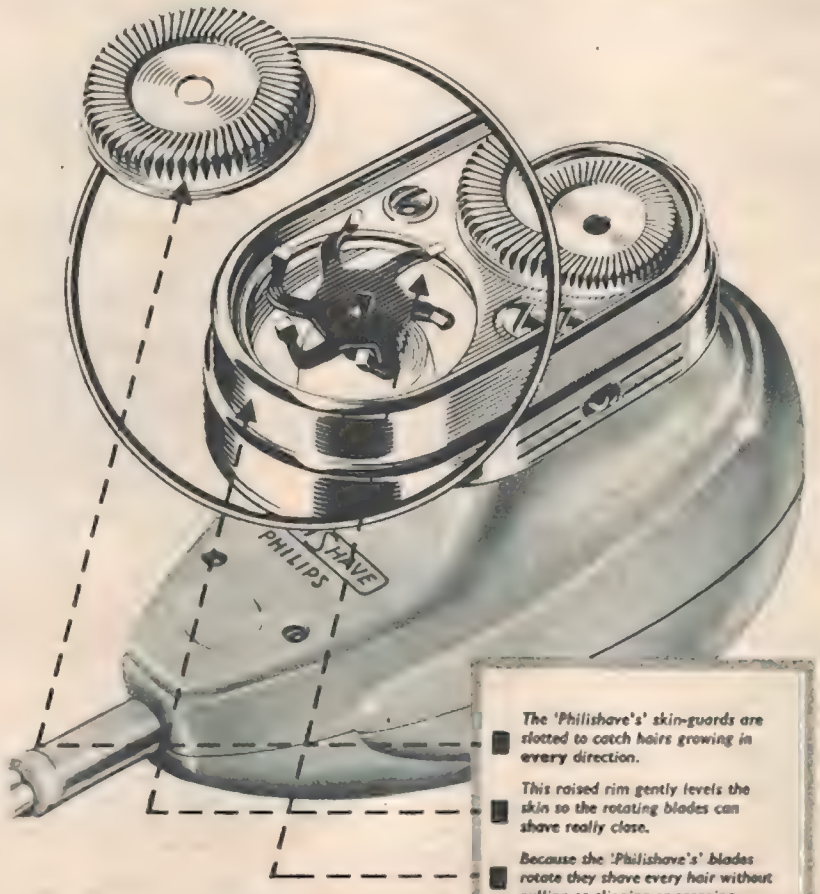

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Indigestion?

Not now—"I feel 20 years younger", says Mr. H. L. of Welwyn

Mr. L. used to have bouts of stomach trouble which kept him in bed for days. He tried all sorts of things without relief. "Then I took Bismag", he writes. "This was two years ago and I've not had a day off work since. I now take one 'Bismag' Tablet every night to keep the stomach free from acid and I feel 20 years younger".

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The bride price

Continued from page 11

the mountain men out even if you didn't know them. They kept to themselves even here, dancing only with their own women and drinking from their own hip pockets.

I felt the excitement in me as I watched them, and I knew that, come hell or hailstones, this would be a night.

There were one or two heads turned when Kathleen came back with her shoes changed, but when she put her hands in mine and we started dancing, it was as if the place was suddenly turned to stone. There wasn't anyone there that didn't know who she was, from hearing her singing, and those that didn't know me by sight could tell I was a fisherman.

That stillness fell that comes to a crowd when it senses trouble. And I felt as if I was drunk. I danced three inches from the ground, I was so light, and Kathleen danced with me, her slippers whispering on the chalked floor and the other dancers falling back in a circle round us, wider and wider, until there was no one in the hall but us that was still dancing. Kathleen floated on my hands, and I knew that, however little a time it lasted, it was worth whatever came after.

The music ended with one wild last crash of the drums, and the hall was full of silence. Kathleen and I were alone in the middle of the wide, pale circle of the floor, with the crowd pressed back to the walls.

I was dizzy for a moment, and I shut my eyes and shook my head to clear it, wanting to be ready. And sure enough, when I opened them again, one of the Moriartys was sliding out on to the floor.

He was a tall man, as tall as myself but thinner, with black hair in a cropped, uneven thatch on his head and a mouth full of broken teeth. I felt Kathleen's fingers tightening on my wrist, but I loosened them, and pushed her away from me, my eyes watching out of the corners in case another of the Moriartys was coming from behind. I could only hope the Killybally men would see fair play and make them come one at a time.

But it wasn't me that Moriarty was making for. It was Kathleen.

"Get back to your home, Kathleen O'Hanrahan," he said softly. "We'll have a word to say to you about this another time. We want no fisherman's children in our family."

I reached over and spun him round. "What do you mean by that, Moriarty?"

"Whatever you like it to mean, Owen Roe. Aren't you the brave man, sneaking out with a girl without asking her menfolk if you may, and standing here now like a hero with all your friends round you? Why don't you come up the mountain and ask me what I mean? Come up and ask Big Tadg if you can go walking out and dancing with his orphan niece. Come if you dare."

He slipped his shoulder out from under my hand, like a ferret, and melted back into the crowd.

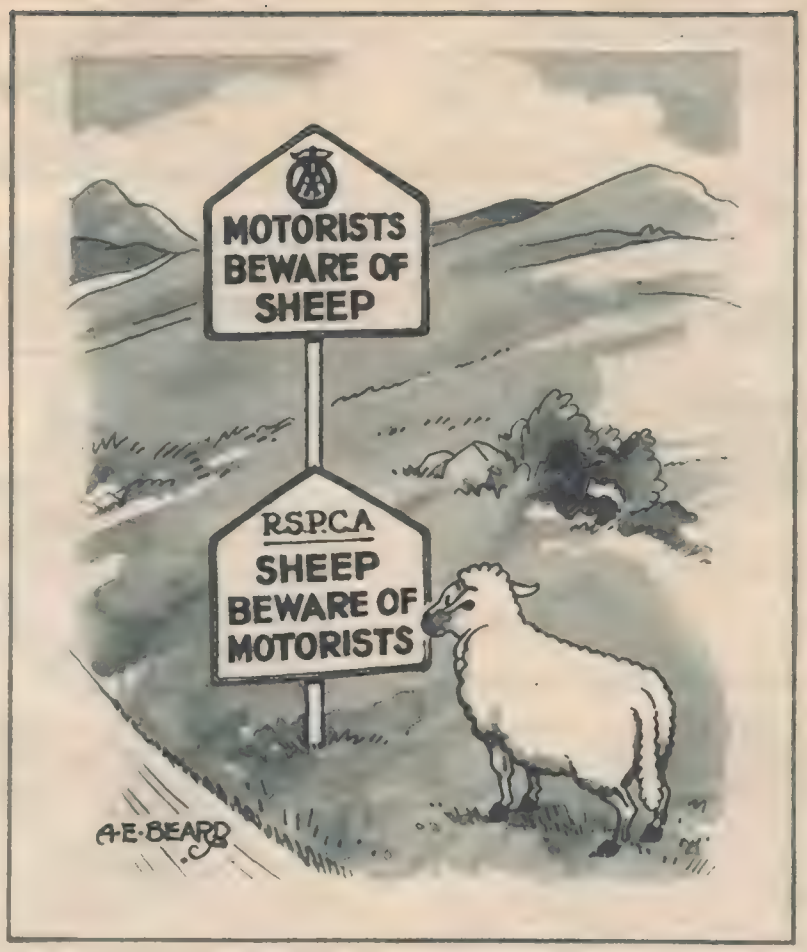
"Stay and fight," I shouted, but Moriarty only laughed, and then there was an eddy at the door as he and half a dozen of the other mountain men slipped out. They must have got worse hurt at Bettymaine than we'd known, and learned sense by it.

I stood where he'd left me and a whole crowd of the lads that knew me came swarming up, clapping me on the shoulders and pumping my hand.

"There's for them, the dirty scuts! Did you see them run, the cowards?"

You'd have thought we'd won a great victory by the way they spoke and the whiskey they pressed into my hand. But I stood there in the middle of the turmoil, knowing that what Moriarty said was true; that only a coward would go with a girl and not dare visit her home.

And, worse than that, I felt hurt for Kathleen's sake, because they were her people that the crowd was jeering, though not a man in that hall would have dared go up the mountain by



himself for fifty pounds, or even with a dozen others, the way the mountain men had come down to us.

I could see the hurt in Kathleen's face as she tried to smile at me, and I could have wept for her. I waited until the dancing started again, and drew her towards the door.

"Come," I said, "I'll bring you home. I'm sorry for what happened."

"And then?" she said.

"And then . . . never mind."

She got her shoes and then we were outside on the road, the wind sudden cold on our cheeks and stinging like a whip. She slipped her hand under my arm, and squeezed it, and I knew she was thanking me.

The road lifted and became a track, and the mountain drew his curtains round the moon. The darkness was cold and thin and I could feel that we were high up, higher than I was ever used to being.

And then, ahead of us, clinging to

THOUGHT—4

If men would think more they would act less.

Lord Halifax

the black breast of the mountain, there was a light.

"That's the house," said Kathleen, and she folded her hand into mine as if, no matter what happened afterwards, for this moment we belonged together.

I felt my mouth very dry, and my heart tight in my chest.

"I love you, Kathleen," I said. "I'm going to ask Big Tadg if I can marry you. Will you marry me, if he says yes?"

"I will," said Kathleen.

I wanted to kiss her then, as I had down in the village, but I couldn't. I could only tighten my hand on hers as we pushed open the door of the Moriartys' cottage.

The kitchen was big, and full of shadows. There was a lamp on the table, and round it, lifting their eyes to us in unbelief, sat the Moriartys. There was Big Tadg in the wing chair, his black hair turning grey, his face falling into flesh with age, but still a monstrous man. His gaunt-faced wife sat beside him. And on either side of the table were his sons; Tearlach with the broken teeth, that I'd seen below in Killybally, and a handsome man I didn't know, with wrestler's shoulders; and Young Tadg, the oldest of the three of them, with a look of Big Tadg across the forehead, and the same command in his eyes.

"The fisherman," said Tearlach slowly, as if I were a ghost. "The very man I was telling you of."

Young Tadg scraped the legs of his chair softly on the floor, easing it back, and the air in the shadowy room became taut as rigging in the wind, but silent, very silent. I could hear the clock ticking on the dresser. I licked my lips and guided Kathleen forward into the room until we stood side by side.

"I've come to ask you for Kathleen, Big Tadg," I said. "I want to marry her."

I looked sideways at Kathleen, but I couldn't read her face. I could only see the look of her own people in it, proud as the hawk in the air, as if being in her own place again had made her proud, had made her feel that these were her own kind, not me.

I saw Tearlach lifting slowly off his stool, his mouth twisting over his broken teeth into a kind of smile.

"So you came," he whispered. "Let's show him the mountain, lads." And there was the slither of their boots on the floor, and the shudder of the table.

"Wait," said Big Tadg harshly. "Wait. I haven't answered him yet." He spread his huge hands on the table top, the fingers like twisted tree roots. "So you want Kathleen from us, fisherman?" He made a sudden forward thrust with his head, so that one side of his ruined face caught the pale glow of the lamplight, leaving the other side in darkness.

"Yes," I whispered. "Only herself, between earth and sky."

Slowly the great lion head swung from me to Kathleen, the eyes like blind pools of shadow.

"And you, Kathleen," he said. "Do you want to go to him?"

My breath stayed in my throat, waiting for her to answer. She turned to me very gently, all the hawk's pride gone from her face and only tenderness there, and love, and something else that reached out to me, as if she were begging me to understand what she was going to say.

"If you will send me to him," she said. "If you will give me your blessing to go to him." And her mouth was stiff with pain as she said it, her eyes beseeching me to understand.

"Send you?" said Big Tadg. And suddenly he laughed, like rocks grating in the tide. "Let the fisherman make us send you," he said. "Let him fight for you now."

He lifted his hand from the table and let it drop with a clap like a signal shot, and his three sons started moving like hounds when the leash is slipped. I leaped backwards for the door, and out of the corner of my eye I saw the pale shadow of Kathleen's face, and one hand half lifted towards me. Then the latch was cold under my hand and the night air sudden on my back.

"Kathleen," I whispered, and it was like a dream to me that she answered. But there was no time for listening. I slid out through the doorway as the first of them was halfway across the kitchen floor, and waited with the door under my hand for a long second. Then I kicked it in as hard as I could and came back with it.

The edge of the wood caught Tearlach like an axe blow in the face, and I hit him under the heart as the shock of it lifted him on to his heels.

"Give me your blessing, Tearlach," I shouted. But he was past blessing or cursing, with his arms flung wide like a rag doll and the blood from his forehead covering his eyes in a curtain of scarlet silk.

A fist swung at my head out of a mist of shadows and I ducked and struck, and there was a grunt of breath going out in pain. Then the floor seemed to lift and hit me in the face. I saw Young Tadg pulling his fist back for another blow, and tried to roll with it as it came, but there were two of them, and already Tearlach was on his knees again by the stove, wiping the blood away with his sleeve.

THERE could only be one end to such a fight. I looked at the place where Kathleen had been standing, and she was still there, statue-still, her face white as death, watching, and I felt that if I could only get to her I might yet win. But the two of them were between us, and Tearlach was coming now, one hand still clenched under his heart but the other fist swinging.

I ducked and feinted and drove my shoulder into Young Tadg's stomach, and he folded over me like a sack.

"Kathleen," I shouted. "Kathleen. . . ." I held out one hand to touch her, and her hands lifted to me. But then Tearlach and his brother were on to me and I was driven back again, with Young Tadg locking his hands on my throat.

Through the door they drove me, until I could feel the stones of the hillside slithering under my feet. Ten yards I staggered backwards, with the blows coming every way and the stars in the sky swinging in golden circles above my head. Then I was falling, and being lifted, and falling again, my body curving through cold depths of air until my head and shoulders struck earth and stone, heather rasping at my torn face, and the ice-cold tongue of a mountain rivulet kissing at my wounds.

Far above me a door slammed, and there was silence. . . .

I lay there for a long time, until at last the sting of the mountain water drove me up on to my feet, and I began stumbling down the mountain side. I'd had my chance, little as it was, and there was nothing more to do.

I looked at the starlight shimmering on the ebony sea and tried to find comfort in its beauty. But my heart was as empty as a broken net, and I could only think of Kathleen's face, pale as a sea-gull's wing, and of all the ways I'd seen it: laughing across the counter of Meg Moriarty's shop; loving when I'd kissed her; full of joy as she sang in the empty lane; and full of shamed hurt as the dancers jeered her people in Killybally.

And now I would never see it again except when she swung down to mass between her cousins, with the mountain at her back, because she would keep her word, and I couldn't ask her

to do differently. I could never ask her to steal away from her people like a frightened thief, to go to a man who couldn't win her fair in the open.

I stumbled on down, falling over bracken and heather and jutting boulders, not caring if I broke my neck.

And so it was a long time before I realized that someone was following me, with feet running faster and surer and lighter than mine.

I tried to run, but I couldn't. I took two stumbling paces and I was on my knees. My fingers touched a loose stone and closed on it. Maybe if there was only one of them. . . .

I turned and waited, crouched on one knee, the stone ready to swing. I could see the shadow of whoever was coming now, leaping down in long, easy strides.

It was someone slimmer than Young Tadg, slimmer even than the tall Tearlach.

And suddenly I dropped the stone and held out my arms. "Kathleen," I shouted. "Kathleen." And I nearly fell as she came to me, and I cried out with the pain of my ribs as her arms went round me, though the pain was like wine to me.

"They sent me down," she said. "They sent me down after you with their blessing for your marriage day, and their curses for the hurts you gave them, and their greetings to the only man who ever came up the mountain to them alone. Oh, my love," she said. "My own love. . . ."

She was laughing and crying at the same time so that she could hardly tell me. "Did they hurt you?" she whispered. "Did they hurt you, my darling?" And there was a wild pride in her that they had, and a wilder pride for me, and suddenly all my own hurt mended as hers had done, and we went down the mountainside singing.

"As I went down through Dublin city,
When the moon began to set,
Who should I spy but a Spanish Lady,
Catching a moth in a golden net?"

Kilmara lay at our feet between sea and mountain, a huddle of sleep. But we were waking, and all the world was too small to fill our hearts. THE END

Passage from Trinidad

Continued from page 21

settled. We sail tomorrow by night. You will take Kestrel to the fuelling jetty this afternoon, and I myself will arrange the victualling."

He pushed an envelope across the table. "There is money to settle all needs for the immediate present. You may expect us aboard early tomorrow evening."

O'Mara watched their departure thoughtfully. It sounded like a straightforward business proposition. There was, of course, the affair of L'Ouverture. Rumour had it that he operated the so-called "night ferry," smuggling illegal immigrants over from Venezuela. But then, there were all sorts of tales along the quay at Port of Spain.

O'Mara shrugged off his idle thoughts, finished his drink and strode down to the schooner.

Desaix—a lean, stringy Negro from Martinique—lay snoring beneath a newspaper in the wheelhouse. O'Mara kicked him good-naturedly to his feet and they spent the whole afternoon on board Kestrel filling fuel and water tanks.

Next day O'Mara superintended the stowage of the food and stores ordered by Meinl. The German and his wife came aboard in the late afternoon.

The four of them ate a silent evening meal in the main saloon, and then Meinl came to stand by O'Mara's side in the wheelhouse as the harbour lights winked on and off and a cool offshore breeze licked catspaws across the calm water.

At seven he consulted his watch and nodded. O'Mara eased the engine throttles gently open and shouted to a couple of quayside loungers to let go his lines.

Kestrel throbbed slowly out across the oily bay, threading a passage among the anchored merchantmen. Once beyond the harbour shipping, O'Mara increased speed and steered for Huevos.

The lights of Port of Spain and the purple wooded hills beyond fell away to starboard.

At nine he cut his engines and drifted in like a ghost beneath the lee of Huevos.

"No riding lights," the German said quietly. "We must lie here for a time."

For two hours O'Mara was alone in the wheelhouse. He could see Meinl and Hulda sitting on the hatch cover behind him; they had made no sound for a long time, nor was there any sign of the expected passengers. Desaix put his head outside the engine-room hatch and lit a cigarette.

At last O'Mara heard the chug of a small launch and soon he could see the craft approaching.

It appeared to contain three persons, with a large bundle amidships, but it was difficult to distinguish anything very clearly. He leaned from the bridge and peered down as the launch bumped alongside.

The first to come aboard was a woman in a dark, hooded cape. He caught a fleeting glimpse of a white, startled face before Hulda hurried her away.

The next arrival was the bundle, heaved and strained aboard by the two men in the launch with the help of Desaix and Meinl on the deck of the schooner.

The bundle was a man, but a man beyond interest in his surroundings or situation. In the shaded glow of Meinl's flashlamp O'Mara saw limp limbs and a pallid face. Then the second passenger in his turn was hurried below.

The launch cast off at once and made swiftly back to Huevos. O'Mara stood doubtful and irresolute by the engine controls as Meinl came in and stood beside him. The German's right hand was in his raincoat pocket and he spoke sharply in a manner quite unlike his normal, pedantic tone. "Full speed, Captain O'Mara, you have the course."

O'Mara looked hard at him for a moment, then grunted and opened the engine throttles. He took Kestrel as close inshore as he dared and cleared the Serpent's Mouth without sailing into the glare of the lighthouse on the point.

The sea was running high now and white water was bursting up over the bows. When Meinl had gone below, O'Mara reduced speed and braced himself at the wheel. It was going to be a bumpy night.

Day dawned like an opened oven; the sky was ochreous and overcast but the sea had run down considerably during the night. Buffeted and weary, O'Mara gave the wheel to Desaix and went aft to the tiny galley for some coffee.

On the way back to his own cabin he tried the door of the companionway from the wheelhouse to the main saloon. It was locked. He could hear no sound from within. He brooded a moment angrily outside the door, then went to his bunk.

He was back on the bridge by nine. At noon Meinl joined him. He stood with his hands shading his eyes against the sun, which had by now broken through the overcast.

"Sleep well?" O'Mara asked laconically.

"Excellently well, my friend."

"I am happy for you." O'Mara said. "Now, there are a couple of things you'd better know straight away. The first is that I like my passengers to come aboard conscious and under their own power. The second is that I do not like my own saloon to be locked against me without prior arrangement. Any comment?"

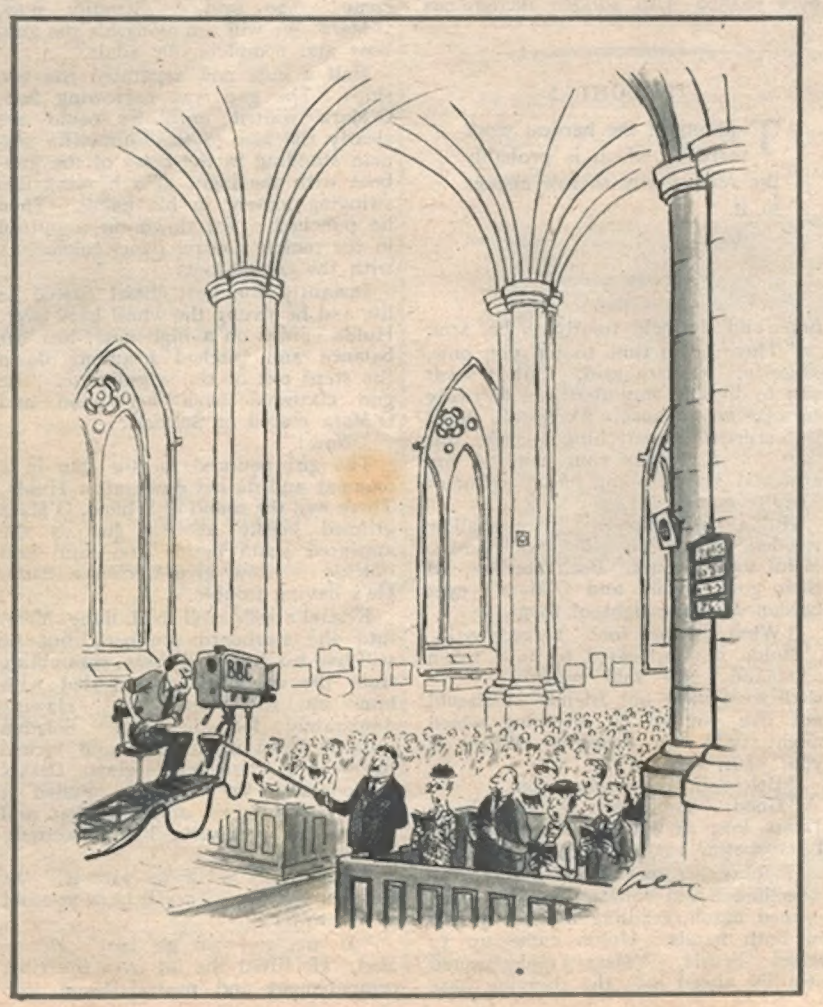
Meinl was all apology. "But of course, Captain O'Mara," he said. "There was no time to explain last night. It happens that my friend met with a slight accident on Huevos, a fall from which he has now recovered. It was that which delayed the party so long.

"As to the saloon . . . an oversight, no more I assure you. You will find it unlocked now, and I shall be happy to introduce you to your passengers whenever you are ready."

"Thanks. I'll introduce myself right now. You take the wheel while I go below."

Meinl shrugged and watched with a grim smile as O'Mara went down through the wheelhouse. The door was unlocked, as the German had said, but Hulda sat close to the entrance. It seemed to O'Mara that as he came in she thrust something hurriedly into the large leather handbag she held on her knees.

The man and the girl sat facing him, side by side at the end of the long central table and at last Bernard O'Mara knew just where he stood. The faces of Don Panfilo Muneros and his daughter Soledad had been in all the newspapers. O'Mara knew beyond any doubt that the place to which he was taking them meant death for them both.



The man looked up, but Soledad continued to stare unseeingly at the magazine which lay before her on the table.

Don Panfilo was elderly and pale; a strip of plaster covered a wound above his right eye and that side of his face was bruised and discoloured. One hand plucked nervously at his goatee beard, but otherwise he appeared calm.

"Good morning, *Señor Presidente*," O'Mara said politely. The old man gave him a hard look and did not reply.

"Our guests do not talk much," Hulda said with a grim smile.

"Perhaps it's the company they've been keeping," said O'Mara.

The girl glanced up then and O'Mara saw that the newspaper half-tones did her scant justice. Soledad Muneros was a beauty. The adventures and rough handling of the past day and night had not harmed her dark loveliness.

But now the large and lustrous eyes were gazing at O'Mara with anger and contempt.

"The company is not of our choosing." She spat out the words.

"I regret that you should find cause for complaint," O'Mara said. "You and your father are guests aboard my ship, and I shall make very sure that no harm comes to you."

Don Panfilo blinked his fine eyes in a puzzled manner, but Soledad flared up again.

"It pleases you to mock your betters, *señor* pirate. There is nothing we can do to prevent that."

O'Mara bowed to her and turned to go back on deck. As he passed Hulda, he tapped the bag she held on her knees.

"I should put that away," he said. "It only makes people nervous."

On the bridge Meinl greeted him sardonically. "Are you satisfied now, O'Mara?"

"You told me a bunch of lies back there in Louisette's," O'Mara said quietly.

"I could hardly have told you the truth and expected you to accept. And now tell me what you will do about it."

"What's to prevent me turning this tub back to Trinidad and handing you over?"

Meinl took one hand from the wheel and drew a Luger automatic from his pocket.

"In that event," he said smoothly, "I should most certainly shoot you and possibly my wife would shoot Don Panfilo and his daughter."

He slid the gun back into his pocket. "I do not see your difficulty, O'Mara. You need the money."

"Not that badly," O'Mara growled. "I am no assassin."

"Evidently, my friend. But you are most certainly a fool," Meinl told him bleakly. . . .

During the next two days the relationship between the crew of Kestrel and the Germans developed into cold war.

Meinl and his wife both stood bridge watches now, and O'Mara contented himself with watching the inroads of corrosive anger made upon the granite features of Hulda Meinl whenever Desaix sang or whistled a favourite

calypso which he had brought with him from Trinidad.

"An ugly woman will never cause any stink
And you never need worry what the neighbours think.
So from a logical point of view,
Never take a woman that's prettier than you."

At dusk on the third day out from Huevos, Desaix broke a silence which had endured between himself and O'Mara throughout the afternoon watch. "What you thinking, boss?" he said.

O'Mara corrected course with a touch of the wheel to port. Then he asked a question of his own. "You sleeping well, Lucien?"

Desaix shook his head. "Nope," he said. "I can't sleep against the racket of a weeping woman."

"You've heard it, too?"

"Sure have, boss. Seems like she's got a load of trouble."

"How much do you know about this trip, Lucien?"

"You ain't told me much, boss." It was not a complaint, but a statement of fact, and O'Mara accepted it as such.

"Do you reckon we've any call to take the *señorita* where she doesn't want to go?"

"Seems like you don't think so, boss."

"Believe me, I don't, boy. All right, I'll admit I made a mistake about this trip. Why I did is neither here nor there. But I intend to put things right. Here's what we do. . . ."

The two men put their heads together in the glow of the binnacle light and talked briefly. After that, Lucien Desaix went below and became busy in the engine room.

At ten that night the port engine coughed and died. Kestrel's speed dropped by half, and five minutes later Meinl burst angrily into O'Mara's cabin.

"What the hell?" he stormed. "We're making barely seven knots, and that baboon of yours is not steering the course I set."

O'Mara cocked a lazy eye at him. "We're an engine short and I've got to favour wind and tide. Don't panic, Meinl. We'll get there right enough, but it will have to be in daylight now. I'm not monkeying around this coast by night with only one screw turning; not for you or anybody else."

"What's the matter with the engine?"

"Ask Desaix. He's the expert."

Meinl swore angrily and went forward. O'Mara could hear him arguing with Hulda in the saloon. The sound lulled him pleasantly and soon he laid his head back on the pillow and slept.

Kestrel pitched and wallowed through the night, making a difficult nine knots. O'Mara went back to the wheelhouse before dawn and gave Desaix a course for land. Time was running out.

At eight o'clock he was surprised to see Soledad emerge alone from the forward hatch and make her way towards the wheelhouse, bracing herself against the roll and sway of the boat. Hulda and Meinl plainly felt very sure of themselves, to relax their vigilance at this stage.

The girl came up into the wheelhouse beside him and rested her elbows on the flag locker, staring sullenly into the far-off haze which concealed the mainland.

O'Mara fished out a cigarette and gave it to her. He said conversationally: "I suppose you know they might shoot your father the minute he lands in Chinantla del Mar. Perhaps they'll shoot you, too."

She turned on him instantly, blazing her resentment. "You have tormented us all through the voyage. It is not by our choice that we return. You know very well that we were kidnapped. *Carai*—why do I tell you these things? Meinl is doing this for political reasons, but you, you scum—you're doing it for money. I spit upon you for that." She snatched the cigarette from her mouth and ground it out on the deck with her heel.

"Ah well, confession is good for the soul," O'Mara said amiably. "How did your father come by his black eye?"

"We escaped on Huevos and they hunted us like animals through the jungle," the girl said unwillingly. "When we were discovered, they struck my father down and carried him unconscious to your ship."

O'Mara clicked his tongue sympathetically, and suddenly Soledad gripped his arm. "I do not understand you well, *señor*. It may be that you are the villain I took you for, but somehow you no longer look or sound like a murderer. Tell me, for pity's sake: what is your part in all this?"

O'Mara's voice was soft. "Right now, *señorita*, I am buying a little time. But soon I expect to be very busy and then I shall need some help."

"*Si*? How can I help?" Soledad's eyes flashed with sudden incredulous hope and she held tightly to his arm.

"There is no time to tell you now, *señorita*," O'Mara said. "All I want you to do is to stay alert and be ready to seize any chance. Above all, don't be surprised at anything I make this ship do. Now take your hand off my arm and start looking like a prisoner. They're coming."

Hulda came up the three shallow wooden steps to the wheelhouse. Meinl followed her. Both now carried their guns openly and O'Mara's eyes hardened at the sight of them.

"What are *they* for?" he growled.

Hulda now appeared to have taken command. She said roughly: "We shall soon meet our friends. I should not like you to do anything which might spoil the occasion. Where is your man, Desaix?"

"Below in the engine-room."

"Good. Let him remain there. Julius, keep an eye on the hatch while I stay beside our good friend O'Mara."

Obeying her meekly, Meinl left the wheelhouse and squatted on the half-opened hatch, cradling the heavy gun in both hands. Hulda came up to stand beside O'Mara and peered steadily ahead into the thinning haze to landward. Soledad, who had braced herself firmly against the flag locker, glared defiantly.

Now the coastline appeared to starboard in a chain of black cliffs sweeping sheer to the water. A mile ahead a great rock promontory jutted far out from the land and continued in a series of small islands around which the sea surged and boomed in a mist of surf and spray.

"Punta Madrinillos," murmured O'Mara. He turned the wheel to port, giving the outermost island a clear berth of half a mile. Beyond the point the land fled back to a river estuary and a small town whose white box houses and slender spires shimmered and glinted in the morning sun.

A grey gunboat flying the Chinantlin colour put out from the bay, and Hulda drew a deep breath. "They come," she said. "Steadily now, O'Mara. We will run alongside the gunboat and complete our affair."

Half a mile now separated the two ships. The gap was narrowing fast. O'Mara waited until he could see clearly the face of the Chinantlin seaman standing in the bows of the gunboat with the bight of a heaving line swinging loosely in his hands. Then he punched a fist down on a button in the remote control panel connecting with the engine-room.

Instantly the port diesel roared to life and he swung the wheel hard over. Hulda cursed on a high note, lost her balance and pitched headlong down the steps out of the wheelhouse. The gun clattered from her hand and O'Mara roared at Soledad.

"Now!"

The girl pounced on the gun in a moment and darted down after Hulda. There was the sound of a blow. O'Mara grinned briefly at the girl as she appeared again beside him, and said quickly: "Now give Lucien a hand. He's having trouble."

Kestrel's wild roll had flung Meinl into the starboard scuppers, but he still had his Luger. Desaix, scrambling from the engine-room, wrestled with him on the wet deck, clawing desperately for the gun. Soledad jumped down upon them and kicked the weapon from Meinl's grasp. Desaix overpowered the German, pulled a length of line out of his pocket and lashed his prisoner's hands securely behind him.

"You won't get away with it," the German yelled. "They'll blow you out of the water."

"If we go, you go too," Desaix said. He lifted the lid over the tiller compartment and pushed Meinl into it. "What now, boss?" he hailed O'Mara.

"Get below, Lucien. Give me everything they've got, and then some more."

Kestrel came around on her new course at a full twenty knots, spewing out tumultuous sheets of foam. The Chinantlin gunboat had fallen some distance astern, but O'Mara could hear the new note of her turbines as she picked up speed. His Kestrel was fast, but not fast enough to hold off the Chinantlin warship for long.

Both vessels were now racing towards Punta Madrinillos and O'Mara bore in ever closer to the rocks. When Soledad gasped, he grinned at her. He said: "I've done this before, and by God I'll do it again. Now keep your head down."

As he spoke, there came the rattle of machine-gun fire from the gunboat and Soledad ducked to the deck. The aim was wild, but O'Mara's back crawled as he stood at the wheel holding Kestrel steady on her course.

The tortured sea-lashed base of the outermost rock was two hundred yards off when O'Mara throttled down until Kestrel carried bare steerage way. The Chinantlin's guns were firing madly and now O'Mara could hear the shrieks of her crew. Sweat poured down his face as he conned the schooner over the hidden reef. Wind and tide were about right; that gave them their only chance.

The rocky island was abeam when Kestrel's keel grazed coral. The schooner shuddered through all her timbers, commenced frighteningly to broadside, then answered her helm and sailed clear. O'Mara breathed a thanksgiving, opened the throttles again and shot into deep water.

The gunboat had seen her peril too late to slacken speed or pursue any other course than the one O'Mara had chosen for her. She drove on fast, drawing three feet more water than Kestrel, struck in a fury of rending metal and sat upon the jagged bottom, stranded and helpless. . . .

That night Don Panfilo Muneros spent a quiet hour in the wheelhouse with O'Mara while they steered for Trinidad. The old man smoked his cigar in silence for a while, then he spoke.

"I owe you my life, *señor*. And that of my daughter also."

"It would appear so."

"I marvel why you should do this thing."

O'Mara spoke carefully. "I've sailed pretty close to the wind in my time, *Señor Presidente*. Appearances are against me, but I'm not a crook. I fell for Meinl's story because I was too broke to see straight. When I found out what the score was, I set out to even it up a little."

Don Panfilo smoked reflectively. At last he said: "It occurs to me, *señor*, that you are the poorer for your altruism. I should tell you that I am still a wealthy man, and that it is my custom and pleasure to pay generously for services such as you have rendered. You shall have my cheque when we arrive."

The ex-president went below. A little later his daughter came on deck and stood quietly watching the stars.

"What is that song I heard your man sing on the voyage, Captain, the one about the Ugly Woman?" Soledad asked softly.

O'Mara smiled and began to sing:

"At night when you lie in your cosy bed
She will coax you, caress you and scratch your head.
So from a logical point of view
Never take a woman that's prettier than you."

The song started a train of thought in O'Mara's mind. With Don Panfilo's reward safely in his pocket, he thought that he would return to an old haunt in Hispaniola where it was at least possible that he might find an ugly woman of his own.

But then his glance encountered an answering, provocative flash from the dark eyes of Soledad. And Bernard O'Mara thought again. THE END

THOUGHT—5

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Henry Ford

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2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed at 6d. per Bullet. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated August 31), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, August 17, for early news of Bullets No. 2,101 result.)

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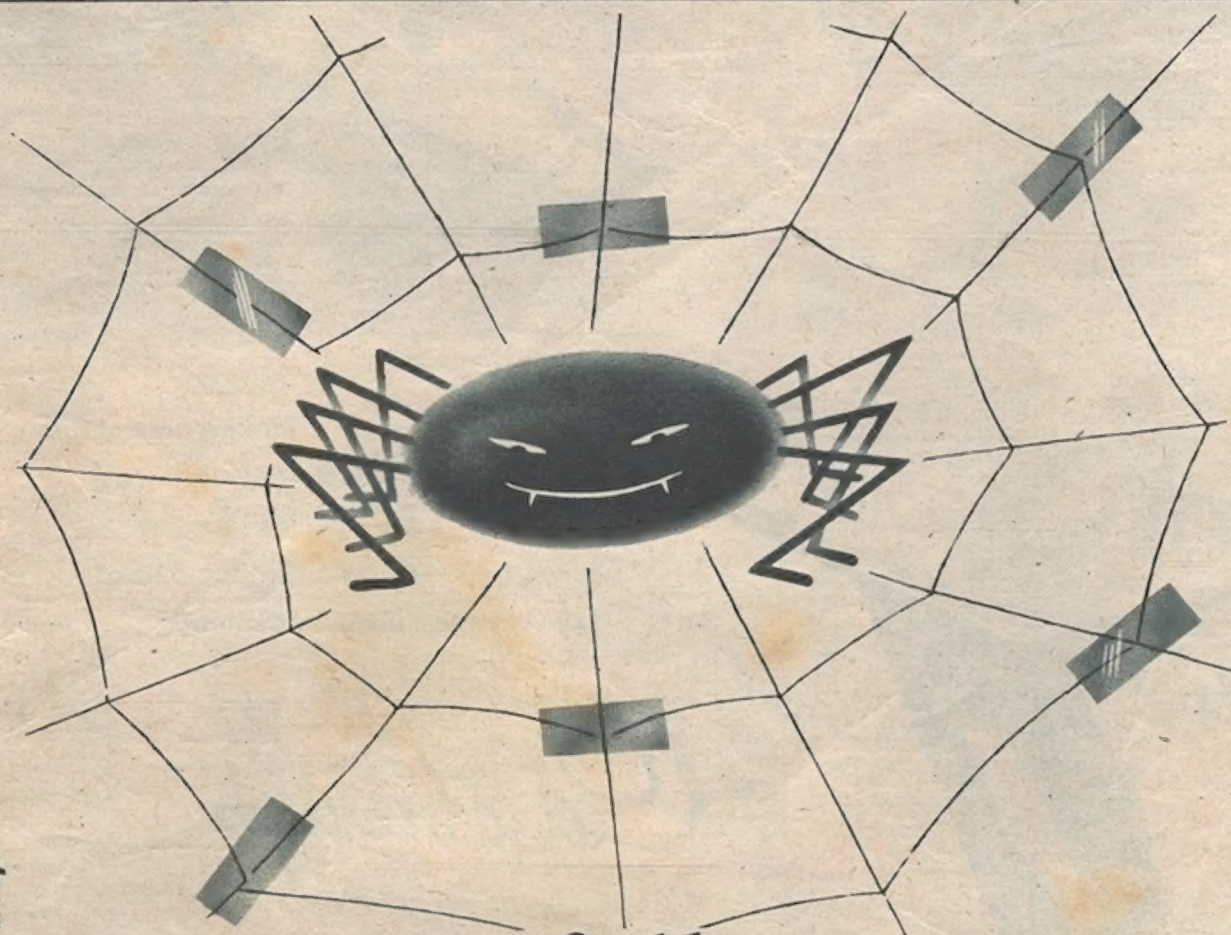

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